























THE  
LIFE AND TIMES  
OF  
HANNIBAL HAMLIN

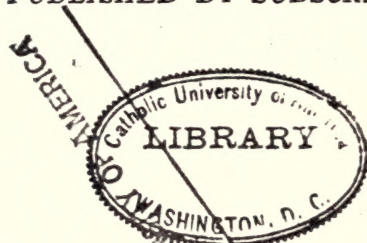
BY HIS GRANDSON  
CHARLES EUGENE HAMLIN

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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IN offering "The Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin" to the public, I beg to make a brief explanation. This volume represents three years' work on my part, in which time I have received valuable assistance from many sources. For the personal narrative I am chiefly indebted to my father, General Charles Hamlin, my grandfather's right-hand man for many years. He gathered material for the purpose of writing the biography, but was prevented on account of public and business duties. He also rendered me invaluable aid in consultation, while the manuscript was being written. I also acknowledge important help received from John G. Nicolay, Josiah H. Drummond, Noah Brooks, Henry L. Dawes, Albert E. H. Johnson, John Conness, Frank B. Fay, and others, in preparing the chapter which demonstrates Lincoln's desire for the renomination of the ticket of Lincoln and Hamlin in 1864. I would add that my own investigations into this subject cover a period of seven years, during which time I consulted and corresponded with many surviving delegates to the Union Convention of 1864. The genealogical record was obtained mostly from the comprehensive "Life of the Hamlins," by H. Franklin Andrews, of Iowa; also from the researches of Professor Charles E. Hamlin, of Harvard University; James H. Hamlen, of Portland, Maine, and William Hamlyn, of Buckfastleigh, England.

The chief feature of Hannibal Hamlin's career is his anti-slavery record. This is the principal story of the biography, and it includes a substantial account of the rise and fall of the slave party in Maine, as well as in the nation. In dealing with the struggles of the anti-slavery men in Maine, one invaluable authority was my grandfather's private correspondence, which included fully ten thousand letters, and nearly half of which related to this picturesque phase of Maine politics.

C. E. H.

BANGOR, MAINE, January 24, 1899.





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# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HANNIBAL HAMLIN

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## CHAPTER I

### ANCESTRY OF THE HAMLIN FAMILY

THE Hamlins are believed to have been Teutonic tribes, clans, or nations of people who lived along the banks of the rivers and lakes in the far-off ages of old Germany. The name Hamlin is probably of locative origin, being derived from the old Saxon words "ham" and "lin" or "lyna," which mean home and pool. Hence, etymologists hold that a "hamlin" or "hamlyn" was "the home by the pool," and that the Hamlin or Hamlyn was the person who lived by the pool. A circumstance that appears to bear out this theory is the fact that Hamlins are now living in the ancient town of Hamelin, in Hanover, at the confluence of the rivers Hamel and Weser, which is the town made famous in the legend of "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," by Robert Browning. There are other seats in Germany whose names seem also to uphold the theory concerning the origin of the name of Hamlin, and to indicate that the Hamlins were spoken of as a distinctive tribe, clan, or nation, as the Highlanders of Scotland, for example, are spoken of in distinction from other branches of the Scottish race. Many surnames were derived in this way, and when Germany emerged from barbarism, Hamlin became a family name. Bearers of this name gradually found their way into other countries, and now the Hamlins are an immense representative family in Germany, France, England, Canada, and the United States of America. There are various ways of spelling the name, — Hamlin, Hamlyn, Hamblin, Hamblen, Hamline, Hamlyne. In early times members of a family often spelled their common name differently, and this accounts for the various ways in which this surname is now written. In the United States it is generally spelled Hamlin; in England, Hamlyn; in France it is Hamelin, — the name of the distinguished admiral who commanded a fleet in the Crimean war, and that also borne by many Huguenot families.

The American Hamlins are descended from the English branch of

their race, whose origin is clearly proved by the old Norman and English chronicles. The first authentic records of individual Hamlins were made by William the Conqueror, in his "Battle Abbey Roll" and "Domesday Book." When he planned his invasion of England to take the throne from Harold, he gathered his army for embarkation at Dives, France, in 1066. He assembled an army of about sixty thousand knights and soldiers, who were of the flower of Norman, French, and German arms. Before the departure William had a roll made of his knightly companions, who were about five hundred in number, and placed it in the old cathedral in Dives, where it may be seen to-day. On this roll is inscribed the name of Hamlin de Balon, the first Hamlin to appear in authentic records. After the battle of Hastings, William, to commemorate his victory over the English, built the Battle Abbey on the field of his triumph, and to perpetuate the names of his knightly companions who fought under his banner he had a second roll made, which he caused to be placed in Battle Abbey. This roll, it is supposed, was removed to Cowdray House, near Midhurst, and lost when that ancient seat was destroyed by fire in 1793. But fortunately many copies of the original record were taken and safely preserved. While some of these copies are obviously incorrect, having had names added to them, yet the name of Hamelin de Balon appears on all, and on some without descriptive title.

English authorities<sup>1</sup> hold that some names on the "Battle Abbey Roll" represent families, and if this theory be true the name Hamelin, in this instance, stands for several men of that name. There are no trustworthy records that show how many Hamlins were among the Normans at Hastings; but there is convincing evidence that there were at least two knights among William's companions, and many among the soldiers. When William set about completing his subjugation of England he had the "Domesday Book" written in two volumes, in 1086, which is the authoritative record of his division of land among his trusted companions. In this are the names of Hamelin, Sire de Balon, and Hamelin, sometimes spoken of, and published, as Hamelinus.<sup>2</sup> In old English chronicles, such as land patents and other documentary evidence reproduced by Worthy, the English historian, there are other records which show that after the battle of Hastings large tracts of land in various parts of England, mostly in Cornwall and Devonshire, were apportioned in small allotments to other Hamlins, who, it is thought, came from Germany; but this is not pertinent to the narrative which is confined to the ancestors of the American branch of the Hamlin family, and is, therefore, of no special interest to these pages.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Worthy's history of *The Suburbs of Exeter*.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Domesday Book* it is spelled Hamelin. See illustration.

**H**amelun ten' d'is com'it' Caruoncel. t'oum tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' uno forlang. 7 1/2. cap' 16i. 1/2. ii. cap' 7 iii. bord.  
 7 vii. ac silu'p. 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. xxi. sold. 7 iii. uat. x. pl.  
 7 Hamelin ten' de co. Moelehoue. Aluun tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' ii. hid. dimid. 7 1/2. 1/2. cap' 9. hids. 7 1/2. cap.  
 16i. 1/2. viii. cap' 7 vii. 7 xvi. uat. 7 1/2. bord' 7 vii. ac silu'p.  
 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. 1/2. sold. modo uat. l. sold.  
 7 Dom' Ham' ten' de co. Moelehoue. Aluun tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' i. hids. 7 dimid. 7 1/2. cap' 9. hids. 7 1/2. cap.  
 16i. 1/2. viii. cap' 7 vii. 7 xvi. uat. 7 1/2. bord' 7 vii. ac silu'p.  
 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. xl. sold. modo uat. xxi. sold.

**H**amelun ten' de co. Keonmeow. B' n'ac'p' tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' ii. forlang. 7 1/2. cap' 16i. 1/2. ii. cap' 7 iii. bord.  
 7 vii. ac silu'p. 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. xxi. sold. 7 iii. uat. x. pl.  
 7 Hamelin ten' de co. Moelehoue. Aluun tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' ii. hid. dimid. 7 1/2. cap' 9. hids. 7 1/2. cap.  
 16i. 1/2. viii. cap' 7 vii. 7 xvi. uat. 7 1/2. bord' 7 vii. ac silu'p.  
 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. xl. sold. modo uat. xxi. sold.

**H**amelun ten' de co. Penp'el. B' n'ac'p' tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' ii. forlang. 7 1/2. cap' 16i. 1/2. ii. cap' 7 iii. bord.  
 7 vii. ac silu'p. 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. xxi. sold. 7 iii. uat. x. pl.  
 7 Hamelin ten' de co. Moelehoue. Aluun tenet' T. & E.  
 7 geld' p' ii. hid. dimid. 7 1/2. cap' 9. hids. 7 1/2. cap.  
 16i. 1/2. viii. cap' 7 vii. 7 xvi. uat. 7 1/2. bord' 7 vii. ac silu'p.  
 7 c. ac pastur'. Olim. xl. sold. modo uat. xxi. sold.

Hamelin holds of the Earl, Caruoncel. Edmund held it in the time of King Edward, and was taxed for one forlang: the arable land is 7 1/2 carucates: there are 2 ploughs, and 4 bordars, and 6 acres of wood, and 100 acres of pasture: formerly it was worth 15 shillings, now 10 shillings.

Hamelin holds of the Earl Middelton: Aluun held it in 3. R. & 8, and was taxed for two hides and a half, nevertheless there are five hides the arable land is 20 carucates: there are 8 ploughs and 7 bond servants, and 14 villains, and 20 bordars, and 6 acres of wood, and 100 acres of pasture: formerly it was worth 60 shillings, now 50s.

The same Hamelin holds dege. Aluun held it in 3. R. & 8, and was taxed for 1 hide and a half, nevertheless there are 3 hides: the arable land is 15 carucates: there are 6 ploughs, and 6 bond servants, and 8 villains, and 12 bordars, and 10 acres of wood, and 30 acres of pasture: formerly it was worth 40 shillings, now 30s.





Hamelin, Sire de Balon, was a man of some distinction as implied by his title, which means that he was the lord of Balon, a town in France. He was also "the son of a great Norman chieftain, Dieu de Baladun or Balure," as noted in Coxe's "Monmouthshire." It is suggested by Worthy that Hamelin, Sire de Balon, and Hamelin or Hamelinus were related, possibly brothers, but while this is not susceptible of documentary proof there seems to be moral evidence that there was a relationship between the two knights, in the similarity of their names, nationality, rank, and crossing of fortunes. William's confidence in the two Hamlins is proof of their Norman origin, for when he subjected the English people to his severe process of subjugation by compelling them to accept Norman lords, officers, speech, ways, and customs, he placed only Normans on guard. William ordered the Sire de Balon to take command of the territory of Ober-went, in Monmouthshire, where he built the castle of Bergavenny, at the king's command, and ruled there over his subjects until his death. To the other Hamelin, William, or his half-brother Robert, the Earl of Montaigne, gave twenty-two manors of land in Cornwall and Devonshire. In Devonshire Hamelin, according to the "Domesday Book," had the lordship over Hamistone, which is now called Broadhempstone, and also Alwington, under the Earl of Montaigne, a circumstance that indicates that he sustained close relations with Robert. The Sire de Balon died childless at about the end of the reign of William Rufus, and bequeathed his estate to Brian, the son of his sister Lucy. Brian settled the property on his cousin, Walter of Gloucester, then High Constable of England. Walter's son was created Earl of Hereford, but his male line became extinct. One of his daughters became the wife of Sir William Braose, and their descendant, Eva, married William de Cantilupe. He succeeded Hamelin in the lordship of Broadhempstone, a fact which might have been simply a curious coincidence, or yet might have been due to the relationship existing between the houses of the two Hamlins.

Hamelin most probably came to Cornwall in the immediate train of the Earl of Montaigne, and there founded the family from which the American Hamlins are descended. He was in command of a large body of men and exercised much power in Cornwall, but besides these facts not much of interest is known of him. He had a numerous progeny; and the name Hamlin frequently occurs in the early records of Cornwall in ways which show that the Hamlins of that time were large landholders and held high social positions. It is a fact at least worthy of mention, that from the time the Phœnicians discovered Cornwall and worked its tin mines, up to the present, Hannibal<sup>1</sup> was a favorite Christian name among the people of

<sup>1</sup> Hannibal means "favor of Baal."

Cornwall. But most of the descendants of Hamelin eventually migrated to Devonshire, and the main branch of the English Hamlins is, therefore, chiefly identified with its history. To-day they are one of the representative families of Devonshire; and it is due to their energy that the woolen business, the staple industry of the old county, still flourishes in the valley of the Dart.

Many other Hamlins also settled in Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and Rutland after the battle of Hastings, and came into possession of large land interests. It is possible that they entered William's army from the town of Hamelin, which is but twenty miles from Hanover. But this is conjecture, although the fact that they became landowners simultaneously in various counties after Hastings would seem to be moral evidence that they rendered William services. From the Norman period the records of certain counties of England bear testimony to the numbers and political and social position of the Hamlins. Thus a Hamelin, a descendant of Hamelin, was Reeve of Launceston in 1207. In 1260 Sir William Hamlyn was member of Parliament from Totnes. Sir John Hamelin was a conspicuous representative of the descendants of Hamelinus in the early part of the fourteenth century, and his effigy may now be seen in the old church at Wymondham. Under Edward the Fourth, William Hamelin was sheriff of the counties of Leicester and Lincoln. Geoffry Hamlin also had a commission to protect the Black Prince in Gascony. In 1468 John Hamlyn was mayor of Exeter; in 1499 Nicolas held the same office, and Henry Hamlyn in 1526 and 1538. James Hamlyn, of Cloverly, was created baronet in 1795. But the list is too long to be extended further beyond the beginning of the Hamlins' history in the New World.

The pioneer Pilgrims, who came to this continent in 1620, as a result of religious persecutions, were followed by a second group of English men and women who shared their convictions. The men were mostly graduates of Cambridge, and held about the same social status as Cromwell, Hampden, and Prynne.<sup>1</sup> It was a remarkable body of men and women; they voluntarily gave up comfortable homes and good social positions in England in exchange for a hazardous life in a wilderness. James Hamlin, of Devonshire, was one of this number. Not much is known about him, but his acts tell their own story. He was the son of Giles Hamlin, of Devonshire, and a brother of Thomas Hamlin, of London, who had the privilege of inscribing himself "gentleman." James is the ancestor of the larger part of the Hamlin race in this Republic. He made a voyage to Cape Cod unaccompanied by his family, and there made a home for them at

<sup>1</sup> John Fiske's *American Political Ideas*.



Barnstable. He then returned to England, and in 1639 brought back his wife and several children. A numerous progeny was also sprung from Captain Giles Hamlin, who immigrated to Middletown, Conn., in 1650. It is supposed that James and Giles were brothers, but their relationship, like the connection between Sire de Balon and Hamelinus, was never determined. At the time Giles came to this country, Lewis Hamelin, of France, settled in Canada and established the Hamlin family of that part of the continent.

Cape Cod was a bleak and desolate spot when James Hamlin and his companions took up their life there. The country was flat and sandy, and the soil was hardly capable of cultivation. The land was apportioned among the settlers, and after much toil they founded the ancient and historical town of Barnstable, and James Hamlin was one of the thirteen incorporators. The land that he received was called Hamlin's Plains, and his house remained standing for many years after his death. Hamlin was also a friend and a follower of the famous Pilgrim preacher, John Lothrop, who managed to supply the needs of the church at Barnstable for years, in addition to his duties at Scituate. Hamlin is supposed to have come to this country in the same ship with Lothrop. In 1690 James Hamlin died, full of years, — he must have been fully eighty, — leaving a good name and a large family of children, most of whom were born at Barnstable. Five sons are supposed to have survived their father; and an amusing tradition has been handed down concerning them that illustrates the indifference people of this period showed about their family name. It is said, and the story appears well borne out by facts, that when James made his will and spelled his surname Hamlin, his sons agreed that each should spell it differently.

When the Pilgrims settled in Massachusetts the Indians were disposed to be friendly. There were five hundred or more living around the neighborhood of Cape Cod, and they gave the people of Barnstable no trouble. But as the English began to get a foothold, to multiply and extend their interests, the Indians became alarmed and jealous. The old story of a weaker people retiring before a stronger people was repeated. The Indian was wronged by the freebooters of all nations that ravaged these shores, but he was never destined to be civilized. He was a passing phase, a picturesque figure in the human family. Contact with Anglo-Saxon civilization shivered and finally broke him. While the Indian was shamefully treated in many respects by the whites, his cruelty and treachery towards his own race must not be forgotten. He had noble qualities, but at the same time he had also the nature of a savage. To the honor of the Pilgrims it must be recorded that their treatment of the Indian was in the main generous and humane, albeit they were guilty of some high-

handed acts. The conflict between the Pilgrims and the Indians, in the Narragansett war, was precipitated by Philip to check the advance of the English, not to retaliate on them for any acts of cruelty or oppression.

Philip, king of the Wampanoags, was a great warrior, the Vercingetorix of his people. In 1675 he formed the tribes of New England into a league to exterminate the English. It was war to the knife, and the English, calling their best fighters, prepared to break the Indians' power in New England. The Narragansett war was a period of terrible tension and suffering for the English; an experience with a new kind of warfare, lurking foes and ambushes, with one brilliant battle which, judged by results, should be ranked among the great battles in history. The English decided that to put the war to an end they would have to find Philip and strike him an unexpected blow. Philip was in camp in a large swamp, where the town of Kingston, R. I., is now located. In the bitterest of December weather, the English, over a thousand strong, marched all one day and night through forests and swamps to Pattyswamscott. Over four hundred of their number were overcome by the piercing cold, but the remainder of the English pressed on. They had the bull-dog stuff their kinsmen showed at Waterloo and their descendants exhibited at Little Round Top. They completely surprised Philip, and routed him after a desperate battle of six hours. Seven hundred warriors were killed, and probably over three hundred died from their wounds. Philip was killed not long after. The battle of Pattyswamscott destroyed all hopes the Indians had of success in that part of New England, and they gradually withdrew until forced out completely by the French and Indian wars. The importance of the victory at Pattyswamscott was recognized by the Massachusetts General Court in 1685, in grants of lands to the soldiers and their survivors. Among those who received land were Bartholomew and Eleazer Hamlin, sons of James, who marched in Captain Gorham's company. In his company of one hundred men, thirty were killed, including Captain Gorham, and forty were wounded. The land the Hamlins received is now the site of the town of Gorham, Maine, but it does not appear that they ever claimed it.

The French and Indian wars followed, and in this struggle between the English and the French for the supremacy of this continent, the seeds of American nationality were sown. The colonies had little in common up to this time. New York was settled by the Dutch, who had no love for the Pilgrims and Puritans of New England. Pennsylvania was settled by the Quakers, who were disliked by their neighbors. The Southern Cavaliers were, moreover, a race by themselves. But a common interest drew the colonies together in the five

French and Indian wars. The success of the French would mean that the country would be Catholicized, and so Pilgrim, Puritan, Knickerbocker, and Cavalier fought for their religious independence side by side until the fall of Quebec, which is now ranked as the greatest event in the history of this continent since its discovery. Many Hamlins fought in the French and Indian wars. Among the descendants of James was Gersham Hamlin, who is supposed to have fallen by the side of Wolfe at Quebec, or in a battle fought by the Earl of Loudon. Seth Hamlin, of Barnstable, was a lieutenant. Jacob, another kinsman, of the Cape Cod family, and who was one of the first of his race to come to Maine, was one of the pioneers of Gorham who held the fort of that town against the assaults of the Pequakets and their allies. He was afterwards a prominent business man of Gorham. It is among the records of that old town that he gave a negro slave his freedom.

The Hamlins continued to live in and around Barnstable a long time as an unbroken family, and their numbers rapidly increased. They are spoken of in the history and chronicles of Cape Cod as good citizens, church-going and patriotic people. James, the second son of the ancestor, was the father of ten children. His third son, Eleazer, through whom the descent of interest to this biography is preserved, was in turn the father of seven children. It was probably his son Benjamin who maintained the line, although the historians and genealogists do not agree on this point, since there were several Benjamin Hamlins at this time. His wife bore him eight children, the seventh of whom was Eleazer, the grandfather of Hannibal Hamlin, and a man of prominence in revolutionary times. He was born about 1737, and at an early age struck out for himself. He settled in Pembroke, Mass., where he became a large farmer, and married Lydia Bonney, who bore him eleven children. She died, and he married a widow named Bryant, who presented him with six more children, so that when the war of independence broke out Eleazer Hamlin had a family of seventeen children and a large farm to take care of; but he was a sturdy patriot, and his services in the Revolution are interesting and worthy of commemoration.

Eleazer Hamlin is described as a large, powerful, and energetic man, with a kindly disposition and decidedly independent and original nature. He was well educated considering his opportunities, and had strong common sense and a shrewd knowledge of men. While he supported the church, it is quite evident that he had his own ideas about Puritanism and thoroughly enjoyed life. One amusing illustration of his originality is his attack on the nomenclature that had been handed down and preserved with a clannish-like tenacity in the Hamlin family for many generations. In the annals of the grim Cape Cod



era of his family Eleazer Hamlin found an array of Biblical and symbolical names like Job, Thankful, Experience, Desire, Elkanah, Bethias, Melanthiah, Mehetable, Shobal, Ichabod, Deliverance, Content, Zaccheus, Hopestill, Tobiatha, and Elnathan. He made a departure in the matter of nomenclature after a false start. He was well read on the history of war, and being a great admirer of Scipio Africanus, he named one of his eldest sons for that Roman general. But everybody insisted on calling the lad Africa. This gave Hamlin a hint, and he called his son in honor of the continent of that name, and children that followed Africa were named America, Europe, and Asia. Twin sons were finally born, and these received the names of Hannibal and Cyrus, in honor of the Carthaginian and Persian generals.

A story is told of Eleazer Hamlin's love of fun. One day he ordered two of his boys to do some work on his farm. Presently he heard them shouting with laughter, and proceeded to investigate the cause. A stream of water with high banks ran through his farm. On one of the banks were the boys, and a short distance away was a large ram, that belonged on the farm. The boys had a red handkerchief, and when they waved it the ram would rush at them, full tilt; then the boys would drop quickly on the ground, and the ram, carried on by his weight, would go flying into the stream below. At first Hamlin was incensed at this disobedience of his orders. In stentorian tones he shouted, "Boys, what are you 'kiveering' around here for? Begone about your business, sirs!" While the crestfallen lads were slinking off to their work, their father stood on the bank, meditating on the ram and wondering if he enjoyed the boy's fun as much as would appear. There seemed but one way to find out, and that was to make a test himself. He took out his own red handkerchief and signaled to the ram, who accepted the challenge and started for his master. But, alas for Mr. Hamlin; he was too heavy to move as quickly as his sons; the ram struck him fair and square in the back. The ram and Eleazer went over the bank together, unable to stop themselves. The boys, hearing the ram charge, ran up on the scene just in time to see their astonished parent throw up a veritable geyser as he struck the water full force. The boys shrieked with laughter, and one of them shouted: "Oh, father, what are you 'kiveering' around here for?" Mr. Hamlin was at first disposed to resent this, but his sense of humor led him to see the affair in its right light. He joined his sons in their laugh, and told the story himself.

But the real stuff in Eleazer Hamlin was revealed in the war of independence. He was one of the first to favor separation; his home was the centre for the yeomanry of Pembroke. There they heard the latest news of the growing troubles between the colonies and the mother country, — the appointment of mercenary colonial governors,



the selfish exactions of the London merchants, the preëmption of trade in certain articles between the colonies, compulsory trade with England alone, taxation without representation, and the obstinate refusal of George the Third to listen to true English demands for fair play. The climax of oppression was reached when British soldiers were stationed in Boston to enforce obnoxious laws. Patriots began to arm themselves ; minute men prepared for action. The night Paul Revere spread the alarm, Eleazer Hamlin, his two elder sons, Africa and Asia, and his son-in-law, Seth Phillips, marched in Captain Hatch's company, Eleazer as a lieutenant, to Scituate, and remained there eleven days ready for duty. Pitcairn's attack on Lexington and Concord aroused the country ; minute men poured in from all sides, troops were formed. Eleazer Hamlin was appointed captain in a Massachusetts regiment in command of General Durant, in May, 1775. Africa and Asia, aged seventeen and sixteen respectively, and Phillips, served in Captain Hamlin's company, and with him marched into Cambridge on July 3, to join the army of fifteen thousand men assembled there to receive Washington as their commander.

The Hamlins were in Washington's command, and therefore saw a great deal of him. Africa, who served to the close of the war, kept a diary,<sup>1</sup> in which he recorded much of personal interest about Washington, Knox, Lafayette, Pulaski, Rochambeau, Hamilton, and other leaders of the Continental army. It is said to have been a voluminous record, and after the war was widely read throughout Massachusetts by old soldiers to whom Africa loaned it. Unfortunately the diary was not returned after Africa Hamlin's death, and no trace of it can be found. But family tradition respecting this diary and the views the Revolutionary Hamlins held of Washington tend to represent him as a man of a more human nature, of warmer affections and more passionate disposition, than he is represented by the statuesque pictures drawn of him in the last century. Washington's personality was an immense factor in his success. He had to face the most difficult undertaking that ever confronted an American soldier and leader. Only a minority of the American people openly advocated separation from the mother country at the outbreak of the war. The majority thought that armed resistance would bring Parliament to its senses, if Pitt, Fox, Burke, and other fair-minded English statesmen could not. The American Tories and Washington's personal bitter enemies, like Charles Lee, who tried to betray him on the battlefield, were difficulties that only a Titan could overcome. But Washington bound his men to him with hooks of steel, and, half starved, half frozen at times, always inadequately armed, they followed him wherever he led. Personal affection as well as patriotism must have

<sup>1</sup> See *My Life and Times*, autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Cyrus Hamlin.

played a great part in keeping Washington's men together under his flag in all their long trials.

The three Hamlins fought in the disastrous battle of Long Island, — Eleazer being the fifth line captain in Colonel Bailey's 23d regiment of foot, Clinton's brigade, — which Washington's strategy saved from becoming a rout by withdrawing at night. They served in the New Jersey campaign, — at Trenton and Princeton, — which Frederick the Great pronounced to Washington's credit as "the most brilliant campaign of the century." Captain Hamlin at this time, to his great regret, had to return home; his wife had fallen ill, and she died shortly afterwards. With a family of fourteen or fifteen children, and a large farm to take care of, the situation peremptorily demanded Captain Hamlin's presence at home. An official report regarding certain of Captain Hamlin's acts commends his work, and speaks of his "gallant bearing as an officer" and "his fair fame as a gentleman." When he tendered his resignation Washington gave him several hundred dollars in Continental money as a token of his personal regard, the gift signifying more than the money itself. Africa and Asia remained in the army, and were joined by their brother America, whose name was subsequently abbreviated to Merrick, and who was a powerful dare-devil young fellow of seventeen, and as good a shot as his brothers.

One very serious obstacle Washington had to contend with was the short terms for which men were enlisted. Men would enlist for a few months and return home satisfied that they had done their duty. Africa Hamlin, who had the best military record of his family, refused to take advantage of the short term of service, and reenlisted every time his term expired. He was thus continuously in the field nearly seven years, with the exception of one furlough of a fortnight. Entering the army as a lad, Africa was promoted to be a corporal when he was nineteen, a sergeant-major when he was twenty-one, and on January 1, 1781, he was commissioned an ensign, carrying the Continental banner when Cornwallis was enmeshed at Yorktown, the most crushing defeat the British arms ever received. He appears to have been a quiet, modest man, and well regarded by his superior officers. An amusing incident is told that illustrates the young ensign's modesty. He was invited by Washington to a state dinner, and unluckily upset a dish of gravy. To quote his quaint words: "The circumstance covered me with so much confusion that I withdrew, and did not accept any more invitations to these grand occasions." Another circumstance establishes his status among his brother officers. Africa Hamlin was one of the officers of the Continental army who assembled at Newburg, N. Y., and founded the Society of the Cincinnati.

When Eleazer Hamlin returned to Pembroke, he entered the state

militia, and was appointed major, by which title he was known the rest of his life. His second wife having died, Major Hamlin married again, and his courtship is still a choice story in the annals of the town of Harvard, where he carried on a large farm and potash works. He made the acquaintance of Mistress Grace Fletcher, a snug, cosy woman, a relative of Daniel Webster's wife, and who owned a little tavern on a farm in Westford. Mistress Fletcher was noted in the neighborhood for her amiability and palatable flip. Major Hamlin called for a glass one day, and, as he was smacking his lips over it, remarked, "Monstrous fine flip, Mistress Fletcher." The next day the major strode into the tavern and called for another glass of that "monstrous fine flip." The third day the major made his appearance in his best clothes. With a gallant bow he said: "And now I have come for the fine woman who brews the monstrous fine flip." He married her. Their farms made a handsome property, and Major Hamlin thus became one of the largest landowners in that part of the State.

After the war was over, the Massachusetts General Court gave Major Hamlin and his sons some grants of land in the District of Maine in return for their services. Major Hamlin visited his land, and wrote a sarcastic letter to the General Court, advising it to return the land to its original inhabitants, who happened to be bears. But Africa, Merrick, Eleazer, Jr., Cyrus, and Hannibal decided to push their way into Maine, and cultivate their fortunes there. Africa married Susannah Stone, of Groton, and settled where the town of Waterford is now located. He was one of the incorporators of the town, and held various positions of trust in its government. He was Waterford's first town clerk. He was also appointed colonel in the state militia, and was thereafter known by that title. Hannibal and Merrick also settled in Waterford. A story is still told in Waterford of his jovial, dare-devil disposition. One day while walking through Hamlin's grant, as his father's land was still called, Merrick met one of the original inhabitants face to face. The bear rushed at Merrick, and having only the arms that nature gave him, he put them to good use. In the words of a quaint and humorous chronicler of the times, "Merrick pelted the bear with stones into a pit, and thereby obtained a juicy bear-steak." Another venturesome son of Eleazer Hamlin was George, who was born during the war of independence. He, too, had fighting blood. Hannibal Hamlin's father told him that George went to Russia, entered the army of the Czar, and was an officer in the later Napoleonic campaigns. But nothing more definite was known of him.

The only one of the four brothers who did not settle in Waterford was Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, the father of Hannibal Hamlin. He and his twin Hannibal were born at Harvard on July 11, 1769. Cyrus pur-



sued a course of study for several terms at the Medical School of Harvard College, and, as was customary at that time, finished his preparation for the practice of his profession in the office of an experienced physician, without taking a degree. He probably resembled his interesting father more closely than any other of Eleazer's sons. He was of commanding size, standing six feet in height, and in his prime weighing over two hundred pounds. His cheeks had a ruddy tint and his eyes were blue ; but his thickly grown, jet-black hair and bushy eyebrows gave a dark tone to his general appearance. He had his father's kindly and large-hearted disposition and a strong and well balanced mind. He had a shrewd knowledge of men ; he knew how to make friends. He loved a good dinner ; he could tell a story in capital style. His air of good-fellowship drew people to him. He was a good scholar and ranked well as a physician.

Coming to Maine, Dr. Hamlin heard that a physician was needed in the town of Livermore, not far from Waterford, in Oxford County, which had been founded by Deacon Elijah Livermore, who had come to Maine from Watertown, Mass., — a picturesque pioneer and a man of uncommon force of individuality and integrity of character. It was the custom in some parts of New England for towns to elect their physicians, and Livermore prepared to do this. Deacon Livermore practically ruled the town, and it appears had decided on a physician already when Dr. Hamlin came on the scene. By a curious coincidence both physicians had fallen in love with Deacon Livermore's daughter Anna. She favored Dr. Hamlin, and that spurred him on to greater efforts. The deacon, however, stood by his own man, and, to his amazement, Dr. Hamlin carried the election. But when the deacon grasped the situation, and understood that Dr. Hamlin was the choice of his daughter's heart, he gracefully acquiesced, celebrated the wedding in good old-fashioned style, and pushed his son-in-law's fortunes with zeal. Through his influence Dr. Hamlin was appointed clerk of the courts of Oxford County, when it was formed in 1805, which position and that of probate judge and sheriff he held a great many years.

This union between the Hamlins and Livermores was a happy one in many ways. The Livermores were one of the first families to settle in New England, and some of its representatives are among New England's ablest men. The most distinguished Livermore of this period was Samuel Livermore, of Holderness, N. H., and the brother of Dr. Hamlin's father-in-law. He was a member of the Continental Congress, for many years United States senator, president *pro tempore* of the Senate two sessions, and finally chief justice of New Hampshire. He was a man of great ability, and his sound judgment, learning, and coolness gave him weight in the inner councils of





DR. CYRUS HAMLIN.



ANNA LIVERMORE HAMLIN.



Congress in shaping legislation. His brother Elijah might have distinguished himself had he entered public life, for he had the ability. A descendant of his, George Livermore, the antiquarian, of Cambridge, Mass., possessed some of these qualities, although he never sought a public career. His writings<sup>1</sup> on the slavery question greatly impressed Abraham Lincoln, and show that he was one of the safe, sagacious, and far-seeing advisers whom great men call to their aid, and of whom the public at the time heard little. It is an interesting fact that Hannibal Hamlin and George Livermore so closely resembled each other in their features that they might have passed for brothers.

Anna Livermore, on her mother's side, also inherited the best of New England blood. Her mother was Hannah Clark, whose ancestor, Hugh Clark, was a Pilgrim, and settled in Massachusetts contemporaneously with James Hamlin and the pioneer Livermore. His great-grandson, Captain John Clark, of Waltham, was the father of Mrs. Livermore. He was a man of prominence, and a near kinsman of Jonas Clark, the famous patriotic minister of Lexington. He was a great power in the days of '75. Edward Everett said of him: "He was of a class of citizens who rendered services second to none in enlightening and animating the popular mind on the great question at issue." The night of Paul Revere's ride, John Hancock and Samuel Adams came to him and asked him if the people of Lexington would fight. He replied: "I have trained them for this very hour; they will fight, and, if need be, die, too, under the shadow of the house of God." On the next day, April 19, the first blood of the American Revolution was shed in Lexington within a few rods of Clark's house. The men who gave up their lives were among Jonas Clark's parishioners. When the old patriot saw their bodies, he said: "From this day will be dated the liberty of the world."

Anna Livermore Hamlin's rounded character and womanly disposition shone in her eyes. She was patient and devoted, always energetic, yet not given to talking. She had New England's religious and domestic ideals and was loyal to them, but she influenced by gentle example and sweet suasion, and she had great persistence. Hannibal inherited some of his best qualities from his mother. During the earlier years of their married life Dr. Hamlin and his wife made their home in Livermore, where several of their children were born, — Elijah, Vesta, and Anna. At the same time the Washburn

<sup>1</sup> He wrote an *Historical Research*, respecting the opinions of the founders of the republic on negroes as slaves, as citizens, and as soldiers. President Lincoln read this book, and sent Livermore the pen with which he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation.

family lived in Livermore, where the Washburn brothers were all born, and grew up with the young Hamlins as playmates until they removed to Paris Hill. With the exception of the Fields, no American brothers have surpassed the Washburns in attaining collective and individual distinction. Elihu B. was the "Father of the House" and United States minister to France; Israel was once a leading member of the House and Maine's war governor; Cadwallader was a major-general in the Union army and a member of the House; Charles was a successful diplomat and editor, and William D., the youngest, has been a member of the Senate.

In 1805 Paris Hill became the shire town of Oxford County, and Dr. Hamlin removed to the Hill. At this time the court used to sit in the old Baptist meeting-house, and was called together by the beating of a drum, the drummer standing at the northwest corner of the church.



## CHAPTER II

### BIRTH AND BIRTHPLACE OF HANNIBAL HAMLIN

PARIS HILL stands near the Androscoggin Valley. It is an eminence that rises by steady degrees to a commanding height. A panoramic scene of great beauty rolls away on all sides of the Hill. The valley stretches on both sides, broken by forests and villages, to ranges of hills and mountains that nearly encompass the Hill within a neighborly distance. The foothills of the White Mountains are discernible to the west, and on a clear summer day the eye can see the summits of the mountains faintly shimmering in the hazy distance. There is a calm, tranquil atmosphere about the scene that comes from the restful and protecting mountains which tower up majestically around the Hill. The air is vitalizing. The little village that nestles on the summit of the Hill is a veritable home in the heart of nature. When the sun sets a pretty legend is recalled of an Indian who, standing on the Hill centuries ago one evening, as the sun was sinking and filling the landscape with its rays, exclaimed in his tongue: "'T is the smile of the Creator." No more poetic or more appropriate description has yet been given to the scene around Paris Hill. It is one of the loveliest scenes of nature in all New England.

At the foot of the Hill lies South Paris. On the east are Buckfield and Hebron. On the west are Norway and Waterford, and not many miles off is Fryeburg, where Daniel Webster once kept school. Many a homelike settlement is to be found throughout the valley. Scores of pretty trout brooks wend their way through the woods. Once game abounded; once the red man built his wigwam in this region. The warlike Pequakets ruled for years, and many a story of the bloody war of extermination which raged between the English settlers and the Indians has been handed down, and is told to-day around the fire-sides of Paris Hill. One, which introduces a figure of personal interest, — the Princess Mollycockett, daughter of Paugus, the chief of the Pequakets, — is the battle of Lovewell's Pond. The English settlers of Maine found after nearly half a century of irregular warfare that with the Jesuit lurking around the scene it was impossible to make a peace with the Indians that they would keep. After a series of frightful massacres in 1724, Captain John Lovewell, one of Maine's bravest sons, determined to drive the Pequakets out of Maine. With only

forty-six men Lovewell penetrated to the Pequaket village, which was where Fryeburg now stands, and gave battle a whole day to a superior number of Indians. English bravery and tactics won. Paugus was killed, and having lost their leader, the Pequakets sullenly withdrew to Canada, and the Indian power in Maine was forever broken. Before the battle Paugus buried his treasure in a mountain within sight of Paris Hill. Mollyockett was the sole survivor of Lovewell's battle who knew the treasure's hiding-place. A fire that swept over the mountain destroyed Mollyockett's landmarks, and for years she haunted the place, searching for her lost treasure. She lived to be fully one hundred years old, and when the Hamlins came to Paris Hill she looked like a veritable Meg Merrilies of the woods. But she was a kindly old creature, as the Hamlins had good reason to believe, and as will appear later.

Paris Hill was a very homelike little village, peopled by pioneer families of Maine. Emery, Carter, Rawson, Parris, Stowell, Ryerson, Cummings, Hubbard, were among the familiar names of the day, and some of them are still represented in the families of the Hill. There was an unusually large number of talented and cultivated people living on the Hill, and the life of the place was exceptionally pleasant and neighborlike. The college element was large for a town of this size; Harvard, Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Brown, Waterville, and Union were all represented at Paris Hill during this and subsequent periods. During Dr. Hamlin's early life at Paris Hill, a group of men lived there who exerted no little influence in shaping the course of Maine in her opening year of statehood. First was Enoch Lincoln, one of Maine's early governors and representatives in Congress. Another was Albion K. Parris, five times governor of the State and also a United States senator. A third was Judge Stephen A. Emery, Hannibal Hamlin's father-in-law. He was a man of scholarly mind, pure character, and serene disposition. Although his tastes disinclined him to active participation in politics, yet his sound judgment and knowledge of political principles were sought by the Republican-Democratic party of Maine. Twice he was attorney-general of the State and for many years was judge of the probate and district courts. Two sons of Judge Emery, who inherited political and musical tastes from him, were George F. Emery, who was editor of the "Boston Post" for many years, and now a citizen of Portland; and Stephen A. Emery, of Boston, who was one of the most useful and widely respected scholars of music New England has yet produced.

Dr. Hamlin built a fine colonial mansion on top of the Hill, and cleared a large farm in the immediate vicinity of his house. His home became a social and political centre. Enoch Lincoln lived at Dr. Hamlin's house for many years. In front of the Hamlin house





BIRTHPLACE OF HANNIBAL HAMLIN.





was the village common, and the young people of the town found the doctor's home an attractive place. Dr. Hamlin acquired a considerable reputation throughout the county as a specialist in children's diseases. It is related on Paris Hill that children instinctively recognized him as their natural friend. He was eventually appointed sheriff of Oxford County, and in accordance with the requirements of the time wore during the session of court a dress-sword, cocked hat, blue coat, and brass buttons; but in spite of these insignia of office and his imposing size, the children of the town would follow him around, climb all over him when they found him sitting in his porch, and make him tell them stories. Yet he was very dignified in the performance of his duties, adhering strictly to the ideas of the Federal party, to which he belonged. He had also strong ideas of his duties to his own children and brought them up accustomed to work. His wife was a perfect helpmate and very active; in fact, she had the athletic nature for which the pioneer mothers of New England were noted, and yet it never seemed incompatible with her serene character, quiet and loving disposition. It rather illustrated her courage and sense of duty. One story is told on Paris Hill to-day about Mrs. Hamlin's pluck. Among Mr. Hamlin's duties as sheriff was keeping the jail, which stood near his house. One day the prisoners, led by a turbulent scamp, knowing that Dr. Hamlin was not at home, endeavored to force their way out of prison. Mrs. Hamlin, hearing the noise, rushed on the scene. The jail door had been partially forced open, and the ringleader was trying to push himself through the opening. Mrs. Hamlin instantly seized the man by the throat, choked him into submission, and thrusting him into the corridor fastened the door tight. In connection with this incident, to illustrate his mother's agility, Hannibal Hamlin used to tell his sons how he had often seen her place her hand on the back of a horse and without any assistance leap from the ground into the saddle.

Another view of the life and influences of Paris Hill is seen through the preacher of the village, Elder James Hooper. He was a quaint old Puritan, albeit he held certain worldly ideas and eccentric notions; but he was the personification of conscientiousness and adhered to his radical views with iron-like tenacity, nor did he hesitate to differ from his church when he thought it was wrong. He preached twice every Sunday at the old Baptist church, and was noted not for long sermons, but for short, pithy, and original discourses. Indeed, brevity was one of his hobbies. Once a long-winded visiting minister, who had been announced to preach twice at Elder Hooper's church, bored the congregation to the point of slumber in the morning service. When he had at last closed, Elder Hooper electrified his drowsy parishioners by rising and saying in his peculiar, snappy way: "There

will be preaching in this church this afternoon, because I myself will preach." If the elder saw a rainstorm approaching when he was in the midst of a sermon, he would dismiss his congregation at once, telling the men that it was "better to get the hay in than to listen to any sermon." The elder had no patience with "new-fangled notions." When women's rights were being discussed at Paris Hill, Elder Hooper, in the pulpit, announced his opposition, and in this unique sentence gave his reasons: "Men and dogs roam abroad; women and cats should stay at home."

When the Temperance Union began its national crusade, Parson Hooper stormed at it in his original way. "God sent rum to us, and therefore it is a blessing if we know how to use it," he used to argue. By way of illustration, the elder said: "I gave my two boys rum and molasses this morning. Did it hurt them? No; you ought to have seen their eyes shine." Now Dr. Hamlin not only sympathized with the temperance movement, — for there was a great deal of drinking in Maine, — but also circulated a pledge and would allow no liquor in his house. This offended Elder Hooper, and for a long time he refused to visit Dr. Hamlin's house. But in spite of his eccentricities Elder Hooper accomplished a good work and was very much respected and beloved by his parishioners. His real goodness of heart was illustrated in the fact that the two sons mentioned were both adopted by him, although he barely eked out a living by preaching.

In the summer of 1809 there were five children in Dr. Hamlin's family, — Elijah, Eliza, Anne, Vesta, and Cyrus. On August 27 a sixth child, a boy, was born. About this time Dr. Hamlin and his twin brother Hannibal, of Waterford, had promised each other that if each should become the father of another son he would name the child after his brother. Dr. Hamlin, therefore, christened this son Hannibal Hamlin, and subsequently Hannibal Hamlin, of Waterford, had occasion to name a son Cyrus. This is how Hannibal Hamlin, the statesman, and the Rev. Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, the famous American missionary to Turkey and the founder of Robert College, received their respective names. It is an odd coincidence that both boys were sickly and puny infants. Hannibal's life, indeed, hung by a thread; but a somewhat dramatic incident occurred which probably turned the scales in favor of the child. As Mrs. Hamlin was sitting in her doorway one day, rocking her feeble infant, old Mollycockett, the Indian princess, appeared. She looked at the child very intently for a short time, and then said with great earnestness to Mrs. Hamlin: "You give papoose milk warm from cow, or he die." As the infant's lack of vitality baffled Dr. Hamlin's skill, he and his wife tried the remedy suggested by Mollycockett. The result was instantly favorable; the child thrived with great rapidity, and was soon a lusty, healthy boy. He rarely knew ill health again.

A few years after Hannibal's birth one more child, a daughter, named Hannah, was born to Dr. Hamlin and his wife. Thus they had a household of seven children. Elijah, the oldest son, resembled his father in build, looks, and disposition, although his complexion was of the swarthy type. He was a natural scholar and wit,—the college-mate, friend, and correspondent<sup>1</sup> of Dr. Samuel G. Howe. He was a student at Brown University when Hannibal began to go to school, and thus Hannibal was thrown into closer relations with his brother Cyrus at the time a boy craves sympathy and advice from an older brother. Cyrus was of a sweet, sedate nature, and pure character. Probably the premonition of an oncoming fatal disease, consumption, matured him far beyond his years. He devoted himself to his young brother, taught him how to farm, and through gentle tact and kindness exercised more influence over him than any one else save Hannibal's mother. To the end of his life Hannibal Hamlin never spoke of his brother Cyrus without emotion, or paying him an affectionate tribute. Cyrus was to Hannibal Hamlin what Ezekiel Webster was to his great brother Daniel. Hannibal's older sister, Vesta, resembled him somewhat in the gentler qualities of his nature and habits of thought, and was a sympathetic companion. Anna was a quiet, affectionate sister; Hannah, the arch and merry pet of the family. Eliza, the eldest daughter, was in some respects a remarkable woman. She possessed great executive ability, and for years was famous as the schoolmistress of Paris Hill, and one of the best botanists in the State. She might have attained prominence in other departments of life if she had lived where her gifts would have had fuller scope.

As a child Hannibal Hamlin evinced a sturdy, independent nature. He was very affectionate and not a little mischievous. His vitality was extraordinary when he was old enough to play out of doors and take care of himself. He bubbled over with fun and good-nature. There was no malice in his pranks, his mother said, but they were the result of an overflowing nature. Hannibal Hamlin's first recollection of his childhood days was when he was three years old. The war of 1812 had broken out, and he saw a company of soldiers march away from Paris Hill. The red nodding plumes and shining accoutrements of the soldiers made a picture in his mind that never faded out. When the veterans of the war returned home, they had many stories to tell about the battles. Hannibal, who was a boy of seven or eight by this time, was deeply interested in the battle of New Orleans, and thenceforth Andrew Jackson was one of his greatest heroes.

Hannibal's aggressive nature was illustrated about this time by an

<sup>1</sup> Elijah Hamlin discovered Mt. Mica, the famous tourmaline deposit near Paris Hill, now owned by his son, Dr. Augustus C. Hamlin, of Bangor.



incident told by his cousin, Cyrus Hamlin. In jumping over a fence one day Hannibal fell and broke his arm. His father was away from home and another doctor set the injured member. A few days later it was discovered that the bones had not been set right. The same doctor, without a word of warning, seized the arm and snapped the partially joined bones apart. Instantly Hannibal, doubling up his other fist, struck the bungling physician a sound thump on the end of his nose. It was a vigorous blow for a youngster of his years, and at first the doctor thought something had been broken. But after finding Hannibal had only drawn blood, the doctor spluttered: "Well, young man, I won't touch you again unless you are strapped down."

Hannibal attended the village school at Paris Hill. This was an excellent school for its time. Judge Emery, who led his class at Bowdoin, Governor Lincoln, who was a Harvard man, and Dr. Hamlin were on the town committee, and took a pride in maintaining a school of high standard. Hannibal, therefore, had a good schooling in his childhood. But while he was regarded as a bright boy in school, he was not a model pupil as far as rank and prizes were concerned. He seemed to learn with perfect ease, and never forgot what he learned. Too full of life and activity to be kept down at his books, he wanted to be out of doors. What he shone best in was athletic sports. He seemed to have been a leader among the boys of his age at Paris Hill, from the time he came among them to the time he left them. He was especially fond of round ball,—from which our national game of baseball was evolved,—wrestling, running, and jumping. He was very loyal to his friends, and always had a crowd of boys around him. He was very fond of pets. He particularly liked horses and dogs; in fact, there never was a time in his life when he did not have a dog.

Hannibal Hamlin's individuality as a boy was so pronounced and his traits so clearly defined that old friends of his who survived him remembered him perfectly as he was when a lad of fifteen or sixteen, playing among them at Paris Hill. One description of him at this age says: "Han, as we always called him, was an unusually large boy for his age. He was as tall, straight, supple, and dark as a young Indian. He was very warm-hearted, affectionate, and magnetic; his big black eyes twinkled with fun and life. Han was always our leader, and yet he never appeared to put himself forward; it was natural for us to wait to see what Han was going to do, and then follow him. Sometimes we would get into a boyish scrape, but Han always stuck by us; he would go where we would. He never bragged what he was going to do, or had done, but he would go ahead and do it, and say nothing. He was perfectly natural and honest; no one ever thought of questioning his word." In connection with this,



Cyrus Hamlin, who often came over from Waterford to visit his cousins at Paris Hill, wrote: "In running, jumping, and wrestling Hannibal could beat us all. And it was easy for us to be beaten, because Hannibal was so fair-minded. There was an absence in him of any disposition to exult over a fallen foe. As a boy, Hannibal was as fair-minded, honest, and incorruptible as he was when a man. The boy was father to the man."

When Hannibal grew older his fondness for out-of-door life developed into his ruling passion. He was a born Nimrod, fisherman, and farmer. Bears, deer, rabbits, squirrels, partridges, and trout abounded around Paris Hill. About this time a story was told of an adventure a couple of little children had within a mile of the Hill. When they were walking along the main road one of them stopped and exclaimed to the other, "Oh, see that funny brown cow without any horns. Let's go play with her." They started to play with their new bovine curiosity, but fortunately the bear had business in another direction, and did not wait for the children. Hannibal used to scour the mountains and neighboring country for game and fish. He became a crack shot and a true fisherman. He seemed to find trout brooks by intuition, and eventually cared more for fishing than for hunting. When once he found a trout brook in an out-of-the-way place, he kept his secret to himself and one or two of his cronies. Years afterwards he would go back to Paris Hill to drink in the vitalizing air, and to fish. People around the Hill said that he could still find his secret trout brook, and no one else could.

As a result of his vigorous out-of-door life, Hannibal was an uncommonly powerful lad when he was sixteen or seventeen years old. Looked up to by his companions as their champion, Hannibal learned at this time what fame was. His reputation as an athlete spread. In those days wrestling was a favorite athletic sport, and a match between village champions was a great event. In a neighboring district lived a young blacksmith who was a champion wrestler. He challenged Hannibal to a match, each to strip to the waist and wrestle barefooted. Hannibal accepted, and the common in front of Dr. Hamlin's house was chosen as the place. There was great excitement among Hannibal's friends, and a good-sized crowd gathered on the scene of the struggle. As the blacksmith appeared, his advantage in size, weight, and strength was very apparent, and Hannibal's friends were discouraged. The blacksmith was very confident, but it was his confidence that beat him. Swinging his powerful arms around in fanciful feints to awe Hannibal, the blacksmith began to brag: "If I ketch a holt on yer, I won't let yer tech me." As the blacksmith said this he made a sweep of his arms that exposed him. Hannibal was not awed by this demonstration, but quick as a

flash darted on the blacksmith, and grabbing him around the waist thumped him so hard on the ground that he saw stars. There was a great shout from the excited Paris Hill boys, and they danced and hugged each other for joy. The crestfallen blacksmith slowly arose, and said, "Anyhow, he ain't a scientific wrestler." There was another shout, and Hiram Hubbard retorted, "Han has n't got any use for science when he can beat it in his own way." The blacksmith was satisfied, and the match was over almost before it began. No more champions disputed Hannibal's supremacy. This match was long a favorite story at Paris Hill, and generally when a story of another match was told, it was closed with the remark, "But you ought to have seen Han Hamlin throw that blacksmith."<sup>1</sup>

Hannibal was a born politician, and showed a strong interest in politics when a young lad. He thought out political questions for himself and acted for himself. A circumstance happened when Hannibal was about seventeen that contributed to the formation of his political principles, and also demonstrates the lad's perfect independence and habit of self-reliance. Dr. Hamlin was a loyal Federalist in his early days, and on the death of the Federal party he became an ardent Whig. Elijah was also a Whig, and he and his father regularly read the "Portland Gazette," the Whig organ of the State, and as Hannibal was the youngest he had to wait his turn. Dr. Hamlin also subscribed for the "Eastern Argus," a leading Democratic newspaper of the day, and while waiting for the "Gazette" the boy fell into the habit of reading the "Argus." Finding that it expressed the same faith in Democracy that he had, Hannibal came to prefer the "Argus," and before his father realized it Hannibal had become a pronounced Democrat, and a warm partisan of the doctrines of Jefferson and Jackson.

Dr. Hamlin was too liberal a man to interfere with his son's convictions, and as he was a good politician himself he probably foresaw the rising ascendancy of the Republican-Democratic party in Maine. He was a close listener to what his boys had to say on political subjects, and sometimes gave them good advice. Hannibal then, as

<sup>1</sup> One who was a chum of Hannibal Hamlin in boyhood days tells me that Hamlin even then was distinguished for great strength of body. On one occasion, when, clustered in the village grocery, a number of Paris youths tried one by one to lift a pig of lead, Hannibal was the only one who succeeded in raising it above his head. From the night of the lead-lifting incident, when Hamlin probably was twenty years old, my informant did not see the strong lad until he saw him standing under a certain tree in Paris, addressing his fellow-townsmen. The strong lad was then Vice-President of the United States. The tree, by the way, Hamlin himself had planted. My informant, while on a visit to Paris about two weeks ago, visited the tree, which is now "six feet round," and as vigorous as was once its celebrated planter. — *Boston Globe*, July 12, 1891.

afterwards, was an intense partisan in principles, and would argue with great vehemence. One night he and Elijah had a heated discussion. Dr. Hamlin, who had been a quiet listener, interrupted Hannibal with a hearty laugh and a fatherly pat on the back: "Hannibal, my son, live a little longer, live a little longer, before you enter politics, and you will know more." Hannibal accepted his father's advice and all that it implied. He and Elijah thereupon agreed that they would never again discuss politics while differing from each other, and that, finally, they would never allow political principles or affiliations to cause the slightest difference in their brotherly relations. The boys shook hands on this agreement in a manly way, and although they even had to oppose each other in years to come, as the candidates of their respective parties, kept their word until they were released by the formation of the Republican party.



## CHAPTER III\*

### BOYHOOD AND EDUCATION

DOCTOR HAMLIN believed in the advantages of a college education. He had been a student at the medical school of Harvard College, and in 1813 was one of the incorporators of Waterville College, now called Colby. He had sent Elijah to Brown University, and intended to give Hannibal also a college course. Accordingly, when Hannibal was about seventeen he began to prepare himself to enter Brown or Waterville. He went to Hebron, and some of the pleasantest days of his life were passed as a student at the historic academy in that town. Hannibal developed a fondness for the classics, and was quick at mathematics, but he showed a marked preference for history and biography, which he followed closely both in his school and leisure hours. The boys at Hebron came to lean on him as the boys at Paris Hill had. His leadership at Hebron was revealed in an amusing frolic, which, by the way, had much to do with determining young Hamlin's choice of his profession.

The husking party was a popular institution among the farmers of Maine in those days. If a farmer had corn to husk, he invited his neighbors to help him, and in return for their assistance he provided a bounteous supply of the good things of the table; and, as the temperance sentiment of the State was still lax, old Medford and Jamaica rum were too often accompanying features of this old-time custom. To the young men the husking party was particularly attractive, because when a lucky husker found a red ear, the fashion of the day gave him the privilege of kissing any girl in the company, and thus the once famous couplet was originated:—

“I would not husk for cows or steers:  
I'd only husk to get red ears.”

It is hardly necessary to add that the boys at Hebron Academy always accepted invitations to husking parties. But there was one thing in connection with these occasions that young Hamlin and his associates did not like, and that was the free use of liquor. At one memorable party an elderly man drank too much rum, and made himself particularly obnoxious. The schoolboys resented his behavior by pelting him with hard ears of corn, and rolling him round on the



floor of the barn. The old man left the scene of his discomfiture sore in body and mind. The boys thought the affair had ended with the sobering-up of their victim, and the news the next morning that a warrant was out for their arrest, on the charge of assault and battery, came like a clap of thunder from the clear sky. But they did not think of employing a lawyer; they turned to Hannibal Hamlin in their trouble. They knew that he was in the habit of following trials with great interest, and at once concluded that he had picked up enough knowledge of the law which, together with his shrewdness and alertness, would enable him successfully to champion their cause. In a body the boys marched to the house of the local justice of the peace, where their trial was to take place. He was a pompous old gentleman, with great ideas of dignity, but little knowledge of the law, or much natural ability. The proceedings were opened with solemnity in the justice's kitchen packed with people, when the justice's ridiculous pomp and ceremony were interrupted by the collapse of the floor. The court, the boys, the kitchen utensils, a closet of crockery, and the family cat were precipitated in a mass into the cellar. Above the uproar rose the laments of the justice bewailing the loss of his china and furniture. Nobody was hurt, and the boys tumbled out of the ruins in a state of hilarity, arguing and predicting among themselves that the case against them could not stand any better than the justice's floor.

The trial was presently resumed in the academy, and Hannibal was placed on the witness stand. As he appeared before the court, confident, smiling, and his big, black eyes twinkling with fun, his companions pressed around him, buzzing and whispering, "Give it to him, Hannie; give it to him," — remarks that somewhat disconcerted his honor. He called for order, and then with a frown asked Hannibal: —

"Did you throw any ear of corn at the plaintiff?"

"No, sir," replied Hannibal, with a twinkle in his eye, "I did not throw any ear of corn at the plaintiff."

"Do you swear you did not?"

"I swear I did not," answered the boy.

For a moment the court looked grave, and then asked, "Did you see anybody else throw any ear of corn at the plaintiff?"

"That," replied Hannibal with perfect coolness, "is a question which I cannot answer, and which your honor has no right to ask me."

Then for fully five minutes Hannibal went on to cite law points in support of his position, all the time employing technical terms which were so much Greek to the justice, until that discomfited and completely crestfallen individual, greatly confused, and amidst loud laugh-

ter, discharged Hamlin, and fined a number of the boys a dollar each, and then quickly adjourned the court.<sup>1</sup>

This incident turned young Hamlin's attention to the law as a desirable profession ; but while he was thinking of his college course and legal studies, his plans were upset by the sad news that his brother Cyrus was in failing health, and that he would have to return home and give up his college education that Cyrus might be relieved from his duties on the farm, to give all attention to his health. Hannibal had enjoyed less than a year's study at Hebron, but in that time he had practically fitted himself for entering college, although the requirements for admission to college at that time were not of the high standard of later days. He had read his Cæsar, Virgil, and some orations of Cicero, besides a little Greek, and had mastered algebra and plain geometry. This was practically all the education he obtained under the supervision of experienced instructors ; but he was always a friend and supporter of the American college, and regretted that he had been deprived of its benefit.

The Hamlins' home circle was now broken. Elijah, the eldest son, had married Eliza Choate, a relative of the Ipswich family of that name, and was practicing law at Columbia, Maine. Cyrus entered the Maine Medical School, to become a doctor. Vesta was engaged to Dr. Job Holmes, whom she soon married, and removed to Calais, Maine. This left Hannibal the only son at home, and his duties were, therefore, largely increased. He accepted the situation manfully, and he had compensation in the thought that in giving up cherished ambitions he was making some returns to a brother who had done so much for him. Subsequent events made it exceedingly fortunate both for the family and Hannibal that he returned home. Cyrus had made him an excellent farmer, and he could make every inch of tillable soil on the farm yield produce. Finally, Governor Lincoln was still living at the Hamlin homestead, and Hannibal had the advantage of his friendship and counsel, which proved to be of value.

The relations between Enoch Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin in the latter's student days are interesting. Lincoln was sprung from the famous Lincoln family of Hingham, Massachusetts, from which the Emancipator was descended, and possessed some of the marked characteristics of the noblest representative of his race. His father was General Levi Lincoln, and his brother was Levi Lincoln, Jr., both of whom succeeded to the gubernatorial chair of Massachusetts. Enoch Lincoln was born in Worcester in 1788, was a student at Harvard for several years, and after reading law with his brother, removed to Fryeburg, Maine. The people of Paris Hill saw a good deal of Lincoln, and formed a high opinion of him. Dr. Hamlin probably

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*, p. 119.

met Lincoln during the sessions of the court at Paris Hill, and with others suggested to him that he take up his residence at that place, and represent the district in Congress when Maine should become a State. In 1819 Lincoln came to Paris Hill, and lived at Dr. Hamlin's home until 1826. When Maine became a State, in 1820, Lincoln was elected to Congress, and held his seat until 1825, when he resigned it to become governor. His popularity in Maine may be seen from the fact that he was chosen governor of the State three times by an almost unanimous vote.

Lincoln was active in public affairs when the controversy of the admission of Missouri as a slave State severely agitated the country. He got a glimpse of the menacing spirit of the slave power, and it filled him with foreboding. He brooded over slavery and the probable consequences that would follow its perpetuation. He was not a man of action in the full sense of the word. His tastes ran to literature; he was a scholar and poet. Slavery oppressed him as a moral wrong, and he denounced it. Dr. Hamlin was a sympathetic listener. Thus Hannibal Hamlin grew up in a strong anti-slavery atmosphere, and at the start imbibed the right practical ideas about the institution which he expressed in action as an anti-slavery leader. In connection with this it is interesting to recall some of Lincoln's words when he became governor, and which were formal expressions of his conversations at the Hamlins'. In one of his state papers to the legislature of Maine, in speaking of the slaves he said: "But they are men, and no plea of private advantage or public policy can justify their enslavement, or palliate the enormities committed in stealing them from their native country, subduing them to obedience, and working them, as though they were beasts in human form. It is idle to talk of legal restraints upon men whose crimes are witnessed only by accomplices or sufferers, of the former of whom the testimony would be evasive through interest and corruption, of the latter excluded by law. Indeed, when you have given power, you will legislate in vain about its exercise, and if you tolerate servitude, you cannot separate from it the horror of barbarous tyranny."

This was more than an acute warning and true prophecy; it was a judgment on the fugitive slave law that was enacted more than a quarter of a century after the grass had grown over the grave of the one who uttered it.

Lincoln also spoke with the vision of a prophet of old when he wrote these lines in his poem, "The Village," — a picture of New England life that was widely read in Maine in his day: —

"No slave is now, nor ever shall be here.  
O'er slavery's plague, ye happy freemen pause,  
And learn to love your country and its laws.



. . . . .  
Avenging justice follows after crime,  
And sure o'ertaken in the lapse of time.  
Oppressed humanity its chains will spurn,  
And meanest slaves upon their tyrants turn."

Lincoln was but thirty-seven years old when he became governor of Maine, and died at the close of his last term, at the age of forty. His too pronounced artistic ability prevented him from attaining the prominence that should have been his by virtue of his talents, honor, and heart. His early death was a great loss to the State, and the people sincerely mourned him.

Governor Lincoln had at this time one of the best private libraries in the State of Maine. Books were then scarce and valuable. The fact that Lincoln was not only generous in lending his treasures, but also sought to encourage his boyish friends in reading, is another proof of his high qualities. He gave Hannibal and his cousin Cyrus of Waterford access to his library, and together the ambitious lads read and studied the biographies of many a famous man. Hannibal's studies were conducted under difficulties that, however hard they may appear, operated in the end to spur him on to greater efforts. His duties on the farm kept him busy a large part of the day, and made him all the more eager to return to his books when he had the time. He had to rise at five o'clock, milk half a dozen cows, and care for other cattle before going to the farm. There he was busy enough until sundown. After his work was done, he had to milk the cows again and take care of the cattle for the night. It was usually seven o'clock before his time was his own, but he was young, vigorous, and ambitious. He read and studied every night he could spare as late as his strength would permit.

The evenings young Hamlin spent in this way were of more practical benefit to him than all the time he had spent in school on the study of Latin and Greek and other subjects required for the admission to college. Practically it was a year's study of character and of the acquirement of information that was of solid use to him in beginning his political career. In connection with this a circumstance of importance should be emphasized. He always spoke with great affection of his mother's influence over him in shaping his life, and one thing in particular should be considered in this respect in the effect it had on Hamlin's moral and mental development. Mrs. Hamlin was very devout and exceedingly conscientious in observing her religious duties to her children. She always insisted, in her quiet way, on one thing, that while her children lived at her home, they should twice a day memorize and recite at the family prayers passages from the Bible. Hannibal Hamlin strictly complied with his mother's



wishes for more than a dozen years. He had a deep religious nature that expressed itself in acts rather than words; his belief in the existence of the Supreme Being was always as strong as that in his own existence. In addition to the moral influence the Bible exerted over him, it also offered him mental discipline, and was a source of strength to him in temporal affairs. In after life some of his most effective arguments were rested on Biblical teachings, and often his terse, brief sentences were of Biblical style.

The line of reading which Hamlin liked best was American biography and history. The life of Washington made the deepest impression on him. Through Colonel Africa Hamlin his relatives knew more about Washington as a man than books told of him. The more Hannibal learned of Washington, — the man whose generalship won the country its independence, whose statesmanship kept it in the right path, whose patriotism and unselfish nature prompted him to lay down power when he was most powerful, — the more the lad admired him. Throughout all his life Hannibal Hamlin believed Washington to have been the greatest of all Americans.

The life of Jefferson appealed to the lad with great force. He felt that Jefferson was a man to whom the common people could turn with perfect safety. He was in sympathy with them; he could fathom their aspirations before any other leader, and guide them in the right direction. Jefferson at this time had been long enough removed from the scene for the country to contemplate his services without partisan feelings. His purchase of the Louisiana territory in the face of the fiercest opposition was now being thoroughly understood and appreciated, in the importance of its influence on the destiny of the country. It converted the United States from a small seaboard nation into an empire stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Emigration to the West was now strong; a new national life sprang up, and Jefferson's fame was brightened for the new generation.

Dr. Cyrus Hamlin, in his reminiscences of these days, told an interesting story how he and his cousin Hannibal read Las Casas' Life of Napoleon together, and talked it over. At this time the feeling against Great Britain, caused by the war of 1812, was still intense, and the two lads particularly enjoyed reading the great Corsican's life because he thrashed the Britishers, and also because Bonaparte and his army seemed to be bayoneted exemplars of Republican ideas. "Every soldier of France carries a field marshal's baton in his knapsack," was a genuine American sentiment, and Napoleon's recognition of bravery and merit as a basis for promotion, rather than birth, glorified him in the eyes of ardent American boys. Hannibal had his boyish dream of being a soldier; in fact, he even induced Governor

Lincoln, the last year he was in Congress, to promise him a cadetship at West Point. Whether the appointment was actually made is not known, but it is certain that Hannibal could have been a cadet, and was preparing to leave home, when his mother asked him for her sake to give up his ambitions to enter the army. Hannibal believed that he ought to yield to his mother, and did so, to her great happiness. This was the last favor Mr. Lincoln rendered this young friend. When he was elected governor of Maine he removed to Augusta, where he died.

Hamlin resumed his plodding life on his father's farm with undecided ideas as to the profession he should follow. He still cherished hopes of being able to pursue a college course after his brother Cyrus had been provided for, and thought of earning money to pay his own way. Perhaps to give Hannibal an opportunity to make a little money, and also to let him see some more of the world before making up his mind about a profession, Dr. Hamlin decided to send his son to Boston for a few months. Hannibal found employment as a clerk in a small fruit store. That which made the greatest impression on him at this time was the theatre. Dr. Hamlin was fond of acting, and his home at Paris Hill was the theatre for the ambitious Thespian Club of the Hill. There were jolly times at his house. Elijah Hamlin was the star actor of the Hill at first, and Hannibal about this time succeeded to his brother's histrionic mantle. Coming to Boston in 1827, he found the old Boston Theatre a place of great interest. Wallack, the elder, Edmund Kean, William Charles McCready, Edwin Forrest, William A. Conway, Junius Brutus Booth; Charles Matthews, senior, and other great actors, were appearing at the Boston Theatre at this time. The lad was carried away with the scenes before him, and was seized with the desire to become an actor. But before making any move he decided to consult his parents. Dr. Hamlin was too broad a man to entertain prejudice against acting as a profession, and he regarded the drama as an educator as well as a means of amusement; but he knew his high-spirited son would in all probability lead an unhappy life on the stage, and he believed Hannibal would have a career in politics. All this he pointed out in a tactful letter. The closing sentence, separated from the rest of the text, would seem harsh, but it was eminently practical. The doctor wrote: "If you want to be a fool, and give up opportunities for a promising career, you can go on the stage; but if you want to be sensible, and make use of your talents in a sensible calling, come home." Hannibal came home, but he always retained a love of the drama. In after life he made a practice of collecting and studying the standard plays he saw, and he had some lifelong friends among the noblest actors of his day. One was Edwin Forrest, whom

he probably met before he entered public life, possibly when he himself wanted to go on the stage.

Coming home in the winter of 1827, Hannibal again set about to earn money to pay his way at college. An incident happened that was of practical benefit to him. An odd character named Ellis, who never seemed to be happy unless he was away from civilization, was engaged by Dr. Hamlin and others to survey a township of land they owned on Dead River. Ellis offered to take Hannibal on condition that he would cut wood and draw water for the cook. Hamlin saw an opportunity to learn surveying, and accepted Ellis's offer. A party of five or six was formed, and they fitted themselves out for a six weeks' expedition. They walked on snowshoes, and slept in their blankets on the snow, which was seven or eight feet deep. What impressed young Hamlin most strongly at first in his mid-forest life was the unerring precision with which Ellis and his assistants found their way from point to point back to camp. He saw that they had trained their powers of observation to a high degree, and learned by experience that the habit of noticing little landmarks became a second nature and a sure guide. He developed this practice to such a degree that he was never known to lose his way in the many times he tramped through forest, or in strange cities on either side of the Atlantic.

With the help of Ellis and his assistants Hannibal soon picked up enough practical knowledge about surveying to make a little money now and then after he returned home. He appreciated the kindness of his friends in teaching him how to survey, and returned it in a way they never forgot. The coming of Christmas found the surveyors still busy. The men were a little blue, thinking about the festivities at home, and were rather silent when they gathered in camp for the night meal. When they sat down around their rough board table, prepared to eat their customary supper of baked beans, coffee, and hard tack, Hamlin slipped out of the camp with the cook, and in a few minutes returned with an immense pan, while the cook was laden down with various pots and stewpans, all of which emitted appetizing odors. On the table was spread a feast for lords. During the few days preceding Christmas, young Hamlin, unbeknown to the surveyors, had tramped miles through the woods, shooting partridges, wild turkeys, and other game, and catching trout through the ice. He himself cooked a partridge-pie, which was the principal dish of the dinner. It was a red-letter night, and there was no merrier band of Christmas revelers in Maine that year than those who enjoyed Hannibal's dinner in the midst of its forests.

This dinner lived in the recollection of those who ate it, and an interesting result came from it nearly thirty years afterwards, when Hannibal Hamlin was running for governor in the most exciting and



momentous campaign yet fought in Maine. He spoke one night in a little cross-road village, where the people gathered from miles around to hear him on the issue of slavery. There was something familiar about the face of the chairman, and looking at him again, Hamlin recognized his old friend Ellis, whom he had not seen since the dinner. Ellis had never forgotten his young friend, and had come out of his haunts in the wilderness to help a man whom he believed to be honest and disinterested.

After the surveying trip, Hamlin found that a teacher was wanted in his old school at Paris Hill, and he applied for the vacancy. Teaching a country school in rural Maine was not always a smooth and pleasant life. In the winter and early spring time it usually happened that many young men who had little to do on their farms came to the district school to repair the deficiencies of their early education. The Paris Hill school in the spring of 1828 had pupils who ranged from children in pinafores to young men and women. The master was called on to teach children their letters and fit boys for college. But there was another requirement that some failed to meet. Among the lusty farmer lads who attended this school was a rather unruly set, that looked on the teacher in the light of an enemy and their natural prey. When they heard Han Hamlin was to take the school, the story is, they talked him over and came to this decision, that if Han was "stuck up" in consequence of his appointment as school-teacher they would "chuck him out of the window," with the important proviso, if they could. Hamlin heard of the plot that was brewing, and knowing how some unfortunate college sophomores had been "chucked out of the window" on account of a little misunderstanding which could have been easily prevented, he took the initiative to let the boys know how he felt over his elevation in life. The day Hamlin entered upon his new duties, he began by calling the school to order. There was a look of mischief in the eyes of the big fellows sprawling on the back seats. Looking at them, Hamlin said in his sincere, quiet way: "Boys, out of school you will find that I will be as good a friend as ever, but here you will find that I will be the master." The boys exchanged approving glances, and passed around the word, "Han is n't stuck up." The new teacher was as good as his word. Out of doors he engaged in all the sports, and in school he lightened the hours by drawing on his knowledge of history and biography for the benefit and enjoyment of his pupils in connection with their routine work. He found his experience of value to him, and often advised young men to spend a winter or two in teaching, to learn how to impart their knowledge and also how to exercise power; in fact, he enforced these ideas on several of his sons at different times, twenty-five to forty years after his own experience.



In 1829 Hamlin was twenty years old, and had made up his mind to become a lawyer. He yet hoped to take a college course, but he determined to risk no chances. He had still to carry on his father's farm, and as he was fitted to enter college resolved to begin reading law by night, so that whatever happened he might prepare for the future. He had saved up a little money by teaching and surveying, and as Cyrus was now practicing with his brother-in-law, Dr. Job Holmes, in Calais, it looked to Hannibal as if he might be able, after earning a little more money, to enter college. In the winter of 1829, when he was released from his farm duties, young Hamlin secured a school at Columbia, where he lived for several months with his brother Elijah, working on his Blackstone at night. But in the spring, while Hannibal was enjoying his brother's delightful companionship, and pursuing his studies with advantage, news came from Paris Hill that a terrible blow had fallen on the happy home there. Dr. Hamlin was dead. He died of pneumonia after a few days' illness. His condition was not thought to be critical until a short time before he passed away, and the members of the family who were not at Paris Hill were not summoned in time to be with him when he died. The loss of a father who had been so devoted a parent and companion was a severe shock to Hannibal; but he voluntarily abandoned all hopes of obtaining a college education, and returned home, to become the prop of his mother and sisters.

## CHAPTER IV

### FARMER, PRINTER, AND LAW STUDENT

DURING the months that followed his father's death, Hamlin found distraction in the exciting presidential election of 1829. This was the first political campaign in which Hannibal Hamlin took part, and it is easy to see why he entered into it with heart and soul. Andrew Jackson was the Democratic candidate for President, and was the idol of his party. Hamlin saw Jackson in subsequent years, and often spoke of Old Hickory's wonderful personality. He was a born leader, picturesque-looking, very passionate, warm-hearted, and honesty itself. His eccentricities of temper and mistakes of judgment even served to make the masses of his party understand and love him all the better. If Jackson was not versed in the highest arts of statesmanship, and was narrow, he was nevertheless an iron-willed patriot, and rode fierce gales that threatened the safety of the young country. He checked the secession movement, which, with a weak man at the head of the government, might have succeeded; he crushed the United States Bank, and compelled the United States to do its own business and keep in the paths of Jefferson, — the simplest and easiest for the young nation to follow.

Jackson was the unique product of a unique period. When the little seaboard republic expanded into a continental empire, emigration to the great West followed. A new, strange, and fiercely exuberant civilization was developed there. New conditions were consequently created, and in this marvelous period of national growth, national faith in democracy as the cornerstone of the republic was enthusiastic. The spirit of democracy was rampant, as naturally befitted the crude state of affairs. Novel problems constantly arose, bringing with them unexpected dangers; in a word, the nation was in a formative period, the Republic was still an experiment. The country needed a strong man, who could be understood by the enthusiastic and headstrong masses. The colleges and schools were relatively few in number; the newspaper press a pygmy, and with the locomotive and steamboat in their infancy, and the telegraph not yet in existence, communication was slow. The difficulties of spreading information among the masses about the principles of self-government were a condition that does not exist to-day. Hence there is a philosophical consideration

to be weighed in connection with Jackson's act in turning Federalists out of office by the wholesale, and replacing them by men of his own party who had never held office before, and who, according to the historians of the day, had at first but crude ideas of the principles of government. The absence of better means of instructing the masses of the people in the art of government, and informing them of what the government was doing, places Jackson's course in a new light. Necessity, the craving for intimate knowledge of governmental affairs among the masses, were a legitimate outcome of the times, and probably had as much to do with "raiding the offices," as desire to "get the spoils of war." Civil service reform came in due time, when the Marcy theory had degenerated into a source of danger and corrupt power; but it was also the product of a new age, an enlightened period when communication was rapid through the press, the telegraph and mails, when the nation could learn of a governmental act the day it was executed and publish its reply the next. On the whole, it was fortunate the country had in this seething condition of affairs a man at the head of the government as human, honest, simple, patriotic, and inflexible as Andrew Jackson.

The campaign of 1829 was hotly contested, and was very exciting. Belief that Congress had cheated Jackson out of the presidency in 1825, by electing John Quincy Adams, stimulated the Democrats to great exertion. There was the glamour of 1812, too, about Jackson, and, on the other hand, President Adams, who was a candidate for reelection, was believed to be cold and at heart a monarchist. This was unjust to Adams, as the country afterwards learned. But though Mr. Adams deserved reelection on his merits, the conditions required Jackson. The new West created these conditions; Jackson did not, though his recluse critics seem to believe it. The flood gates of democracy were opened, and Jackson was overwhelmingly elected.<sup>1</sup>

Although Hamlin was not yet old enough to vote, he spoke for Old Hickory, and shared in the exultation over his success. The campaign had an interesting effect on him. Plodding on the farm and reading law at night he found rather slow work, and he looked for an opportunity to forge ahead. One came in an amusing manner. Two years before this, Asa Barton, a bookseller of Paris Hill, had established a weekly newspaper under the title of the "Oxford Democrat." It was successful, but for some unknown reason Mr. Barton took offense at his surroundings, and one fine day the good people of Paris Hill woke up to find that Barton and his newspaper had disappeared. The night before, Barton had placed his entire establishment in an ox cart, and taken it over to the rival and neighboring town of Norway. Of course, Norway had a roar of laughter over the discomfiture of

<sup>1</sup> For the other view of Jackson, see his life by Professor William G. Sumner.



Paris Hill, and this incited the Jackson Democrats of the Hill to have a newspaper whose policy and movements also they could control. Accordingly, Judge Emery, Alanson Mellen, Moses Hammond, Thomas Webster, Alfred Andrews, Thomas Crocker, and Rufus K. Goodenow, who was afterwards a member of Congress, raised the money necessary, and started a weekly newspaper, under the title of the "Jeffersonian." Joseph G. Cole, a Harvard graduate and a law student in Judge Emery's office, was appointed editor at a salary of one dollar and a half a week, which, strange as it may seem, was satisfactory compensation, since it enabled the editor to live at the best boarding-house at Paris Hill.

Hamlin knew the Emerys well, and at this time was a frequent visitor at their house. He was attached to Judge Emery's daughter Sarah, and although no engagement as yet existed between them, it was understood that there was likely to be one when Hannibal's circumstances permitted him to declare himself. Judge Emery took a strong interest in the young man, and encouraged him to strike out into politics. Hamlin learned about this time that the "Jeffersonian" might be purchased. Without saying anything to outsiders, he had a quiet conversation with the owners, with the result that one day in May, 1830, he walked into the office of the "Jeffersonian," and finding there a young man of his own age, whose bright and frank face reflected a quick mind and honest character, said to him :—

"Horatio, Tom Witts and I have bought the 'Jeffersonian.' He is already sick of his bargain. Will you come into partnership with me?"

This was Horatio King, who was at the beginning of his active career. He lived near Paris Hill, and saw a great deal of Hannibal Hamlin as boy and man. He was now the printer's devil, and pondering a career as a newspaper editor. In an amusing reminiscence, King told how it took him a long time to decide in what manner to submit an article to the "Jeffersonian." Finally he sent it to the editor-in-chief, Cole, as an anonymous communication, who, to King's great delight, published it. Then he announced himself to Cole's great amazement as the author.

King was taken by surprise at the sudden change in the ownership of the "Jeffersonian," but as it offered him an opportunity to promote his own fortunes he readily agreed. The young men did not have enough money to buy the paper outright; Hamlin had only two hundred and fifty dollars, which was his share of his father's estate. The owners of the "Jeffersonian," however, accepted notes for the balance of the debt, and on May 30, 1830, the paper appeared under the management of Hamlin and King. As Hamlin did not know how to set type, he consented to release Witts, the foreman, from

his agreement to buy the "Jeffersonian," on condition that he would do two weeks' work in the office for nothing. Witts had to carry out his promise, and Hamlin learned enough from him to get started as a printer. King succeeded Witts as foreman and Cole remained the editor.

The office boy was Henry Carter, another lad with a future before him. He was distantly related to Hamlin, and ran away from his home in Portland to learn the newspaper business under his kinsman. The three lads had a busy time for the next six months, and Hamlin, who worked as writer, printer, farmer, and law student, used to refer jokingly to this experience as his college education. The "Jeffersonian" was printed on a Ramage press and required two pulls for each side of the paper. Cole wrote one dignified editorial, a week, Hamlin and King assisted and also turned in news. To save time Hamlin would often set his matter up "hot from the brain," without reducing it first to writing. When they worked the press, King handled the fly and Hamlin would ink the type. He used to say with a smile that a little ink would not hurt his complexion. His associates said that he was always jolly and full of fun, except at times when he seemed to be "wandering in dreams," possibly thinking of a career beyond that little office. King told a story to illustrate Hamlin's fun-loving disposition. A gaping boy applied for a position in the office, and when he asked how to learn the printing business, Hamlin told him that he must begin by eating printer's ink. Before any one could stop him, he scooped some of the stuff into his mouth. But the young partners squared things by teaching him how to set type.

In six months Hamlin found that the "Jeffersonian" was not making enough money for two proprietors, and he offered to sell out to King or buy him out. King decided to buy, and subsequently merged the "Jeffersonian" into a Portland newspaper, after which he entered the government postal service. Cole established a law office, and Hamlin and Carter read with him for a year or more. "All the leading traits in Hamlin's character," wrote Mr. Carter, "which distinguished him in public life were conspicuous in those days — only they grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength by coming in contact with the outer world. Never despising what he could learn from books and schools, he learned vastly more from his struggles and experience in actual life. In the village lyceum he was easily the best debater, although he had never studied elocution in the schools. He did not attempt any flight of oratory or rhetoric; he simply had ideas or points to present, and expressed himself in a natural, earnest, effective manner. He was always himself; always Han Hamlin; without any attempt at imitation or display. He was strongly demo-

cratic in all his ideas and manner. After the death of his father, the care of the Hamlin estate devolved on him, which brought him in contact with the plain people, and served to strengthen his natural tendency to turn from the artificial and cling to the real."

Other interesting glimpses of young Hamlin's personal character were afforded by his associate of those days. "We walked, rode, fished, hunted, and danced, and he always treated me as a companion, although four or five years older. I regarded him both as a companion and a mentor. Our most common amusement was hunting, and in our excursions over the country we were always accompanied by Hamlin's little dog Carlo. The two were inseparable. At home, in the office, or in the woods, there was Carlo by Hamlin's side. He was small, short-haired, swift of foot, nice head, and bright eyes, and always clean. He was very affectionate, and would show it by wagging his tail, barking, and looking up with his expressive eyes. Hamlin loved that little dog, and Carlo loved him, and it was exhilarating to see Carlo jump when Hamlin would take his gun. Carlo would dart ahead and sometimes in his zeal run out of sight. Occasionally we would play him a trick and switch off on another path. When he missed us we would hear his reproachful yells, and he would wag all over when he caught us again. I never saw a dog so clever in treeing partridges, nor one so affectionate. Years and years afterwards when Hamlin was collector of the port of Boston, I spent an evening with him, and Carlo was a prominent topic of conversation. And sixty years afterwards there is no picture of Han Hamlin so vivid in my mind as when he was walking across the green at Paris Hill, with Carlo by his side."

Hamlin's magnetism was recognized at that time, and a story was told that illustrated his power to soothe ruffled spirits. He planned a ride into the country one day with Carter and several young women, to spend the afternoon with the uncle of one of the women in the party. Hamlin forgot to inform those they intended to call on of their contemplated visit. They arrived at their destination about noon, and just as the young ladies were about to enter the house it occurred to Hamlin that he had made a blunder. The fact was, it was in the middle of the haying season, when their host was as busy as he could be in his field. Moreover, it was just dinner hour, and no preparations had been made to receive guests. What made it still worse was the fact that the enforced host was a retired sea captain, of a curt manner, developed from long life on shipboard. The girls, of course, knew nothing of the situation, and were chilled when the old captain, stern-looking, with a cue, and in his shirtsleeves, came into the room with a look that plainly asked, "What's your business?" "It was Hamlin's excursion," said Mr. Carter, "and I stood



back to let him settle with the social function ; and how well he did it ! He explained and apologized with great skill and discernment, and gradually the captain's face lost its austere look. Then Hamlin with great tact drew out some of his best sea yarns, and in the end the old sea-dog was completely fascinated. He finally forgot his haying, and invited us to dinner, and actually compelled us to spend the evening with him."

Another incident foreshadowed the coming man. "In those days," wrote Mr. Carter, "Hamlin exhibited the same traits of loyalty to his friends for which he was noted in after years. One winter I was engaged to teach school near Paris Hill. There was a bitter sectarian war between the Baptists and the Universalists, and the teacher was usually the one who suffered. Hamlin invited me to a dance at Poland one night, and an immense fall of snow prevented me from returning to school the next morning. An illiterate busybody, who opposed the agent who appointed me, seized the opportunity to make war. He had a petition drawn up, asking the school board to dismiss me on the charges that I had 'neglected my duties as a teacher to indulge in worldly and sinful pleasures,' that I 'had used profane language,' and was 'inefficient.' Hamlin came forward and said that as he had got me into the scrape he would get me out. He had read some law, and had also studied the trial of cases in court. He had also investigated the school and knew that it was a success. He finally understood the animus of the charges and the character of the man who made them. He said to me, 'We will have some fun out of this,' and then planned to vindicate me. This he did in his own way, and without any help from his elders.

"The incident revived the old feud, and there was no little excitement when the hearing began in the schoolhouse. My enemy made a long speech, saying that his children had made little or no improvement in reading that he could ascertain, that I had been heard to swear, and was not competent. Hamlin at once put him on the stand and asked him to read and write on the spot. This staggered him ; he could do neither. Hamlin then called up my enemy's son, and asked him what profane words I had used. The boy replied that I had been heard to say that a certain man was a 'poor deaf old devil.' Hamlin asked him if he had heard anything stronger than that at home, and silence was the reply. Hamlin next placed a minister on the stand, and asked him if saying a man was a deaf old devil was swearing. The minister said no, and that it 'was not taking the name of the Lord in vain.' By this time the audience was in a roar of laughter, and yet Hamlin was not done. He was filled with righteous indignation, and made a speech that would have done him credit in later years, denouncing the spirit of warfare in the district as a dis-

grace to civilization, a detriment to education, and the petition as persecution. The committee at once dismissed the case, and publicly complimented me. The boys, who were all friendly to me, started to snowball my enemy, and it was all Hamlin, the agent, and I could do to stop them. But that was like Hannibal Hamlin. He could be as merciful to a fallen enemy as he was merciless in felling him."

This group of young men is of more than ordinary interest, and the subsequent lives of young Hamlin's companions were a source of pride to him. Cole became a successful lawyer, and was for many years a district judge in Maine. King rose in the government postal service to the top, and was postmaster-general in Buchanan's Cabinet during the latter part of his administration, when he called loyal men to his side. Carter returned to journalism and became editor of the "Portland Advertiser." He rendered valuable service when the Republican party was formed, and was one of the men who placed Hannibal Hamlin at the head of his party when he was elected governor. He was subsequently a member of the state Senate of Massachusetts, and for many years the municipal judge of Haverhill.

## CHAPTER V

### HANNIBAL HAMLIN AS A LAWYER

AFTER Hamlin sold out his interest in the "Jeffersonian," he tried to devote himself to the study of law in Cole's office. But he soon found that he could not give all his attention to the law without detriment to his mother's farm and live stock, and he had to adapt himself to circumstances as best he could. The farm hands noticed that when he was called to the field he generally brought a law book with him, and usually found a chance to make use of it. When he hoed potatoes they often saw him studying out a case while standing at the head of a row of potato hills. Presently he would put down the book, and con the case over in his mind while working down to the end of the row and back on the next. Then he would take up his book, read over another page or paragraph, and fix it in his mind while hoeing the next row in turn. But this was slow work, and Hamlin saw that to get ahead he must have a year's study in an office where he could get some practical experience with the mechanism of the law. To this end, he earned money by surveying land and copying legal papers for lawyers outside of his regular hours of work. By hard toil and careful saving, in two years' time he had got together more than enough money to pay his expenses for a year in Portland, where he had decided to go. At this time the leading law firm in Portland was Fessenden & Deblois. Young Hamlin called upon them, and asked to be accepted as a student in their office. They consented, and for the following year Hamlin had the opportunities he had sought.

In other respects, Hamlin's associations with Fessenden & Deblois were fortunate for him. They were not only able lawyers, but they were also fine men. The senior partner was General Samuel Fessenden, one of the most interesting and picturesque men identified with the legal profession and political history of Maine. He had a magnificent personality; his form was towering; he had a noble face, kindly, expressive eyes, and a calm, confident air. He was what he looked, a born leader and a man of heart and principle. He was descended from the pioneer Fessenden family of Massachusetts, and was educated at Dartmouth. He left his mark there as a scholar, and in after years the presidency of the college was offered to him.

*Handwritten note:*  
Fessenden  
Deblois  
Hamlin



Coming to Portland, he took and maintained a high position at the Cumberland bar, which numbers among its leaders men of national reputation, including Simon Greenleaf, William Pitt Fessenden, and Thomas B. Reed. General Fessenden disputed the leadership of the Cumberland bar with Greenleaf, until the latter attached himself to the Harvard Law School, but did not care for public life. William Pitt Fessenden was his son, but he was no abler man than his remarkable father. A difference was that one sought a political career, the other declined it. General Fessenden was best known in New England as a pioneer Abolitionist. Thomas A. Deblois, his partner, was a Massachusetts man. After graduating from Harvard he came to Portland, and for many years was associated with General Fessenden. He was a man of sterling qualities, of dignified presence, and was widely respected.

When Hamlin entered the office of Fessenden & Deblois, in 1832, the legal profession still enforced stringent rules upon students, and observed certain ideas of professional etiquette. Students, as a rule, were required to light office fires, sweep floors, run errands, and do other acts of a rather menial capacity. Lawyers usually wore the old-fashioned swallow-tailed coat, the buff waistcoat, and the stock. Fessenden & Deblois, however, had their own ideas about their duties and relations to their students. They believed in encouraging young men and in instilling high ideas of dignity and courtesy in them. They personally interested themselves in their student, and treated him almost as if he were of their own flesh and blood; in fact, they seemed to make little distinction between him and William Pitt Fessenden, who had just left Bowdoin to enter his father's office. General Fessenden was continually offering practical suggestions; Mr. Deblois gave earnest advice and explanation. They were very thoughtful about little things. Hamlin never forgot their kindness to him. Many years afterwards he used to tell a story that illustrated the consideration of his preceptors. One day a client, under indictment, called at the office to have a consultation. Hamlin was preparing to retire to the adjoining room when General Fessenden stopped him, saying, "Hold on, my son. You are a member of our legal family; we have no secrets from you. And I think you had better stay here, to see how the mechanism of the law works in such cases."

During this year the Abolition movement in the United States received great impetus from the election of a Parliament pledged to abolish slavery in the English colonies. Slavery became a subject of constant interest and discussion between General Fessenden and Hamlin. This noble man hated slavery and fiercely denounced it. He joined the New England Anti-Slavery Society when the only

meeting place it could get in Boston was a barn loft behind the Marlborough Hotel, and he was also president of the society at one time. Hamlin had then fixed and positive ideas about slavery. In one of his conversations with Fessenden, he said: —

“General, I hate slavery, and I would fight it if ever I got a chance. I believe in Abolition, and hope it will come, but I do not believe in the Abolitionists with the exception of yourself.”

In truth, the Abolitionists of this period, notwithstanding the humanity of their cause, with but few exceptions were as erratic, unpractical, and visionary as they were later when they proposed to dissolve the Union to prevent slavery from being extended into free soil. General Fessenden was a man too broad-gauged to overlook the practical side of the slavery question. He believed that the part the Abolitionists had to play was to agitate. He was too far-sighted, too patriotic, to sympathize with the disunionists among the Abolitionists. Fully a quarter of a century before the slaveholders' war of secession broke out, this far-seeing man created a scene in the old Portland court-house by predicting, in the presence of a number of pro-slavery men, that the slave power would bring on a war that would end in its own destruction. Fessenden liked Hamlin, it would appear, all the better for his frankness, and formed a favorable opinion of his ideas about slavery. In subsequent years, as will be seen later, he came to Hamlin's help when the slave power was trying to crush him. This was an outcome of their early associations. Mr. Deblois also proved himself a stanch friend in emergencies, to be related in other chapters. Another interesting friendship young Hamlin formed at this time was with Neal Dow, who was then entering his picturesque career.

The last thing General Fessenden did for Hamlin, with the approbation of Mr. Deblois, shows the nature of the two men. As Hamlin was about to leave Portland, he tendered his preceptors the usual fee exacted from law students. It amounted to several hundred dollars. General Fessenden handed the money back, saying, “I think you can make better use of the money than we can, my boy. Then again, if I know you right, and I think I do, you yourself will encourage deserving young men when you will be able to.” This act of generosity was never forgotten.

This was an unexpected lift for Hamlin, and enabled him to strike out for himself at once. On returning to Paris Hill, in the spring of 1833, he was admitted to the bar, and complimented by the court on his examination. The same day on which he was admitted to the practice of his profession, he won his first case, with a pleasing result. The case was this. Just before Hamlin went to Portland, a man named Houghton came into Mr. Cole's office to engage him to

try a case before the local justice. Cole was away, and Houghton insisted that Hamlin should take the case. A valuable cow of his, Houghton explained, had been kicked to death by a horse belonging to a neighbor, and he wanted damages. Hamlin argued the case and won, but an appeal was taken, and it came up for hearing before the court, just after Hamlin had passed his examination. Houghton asked Hamlin to appear for him, but when the young lawyer found that he was to be pitted against Judge Emery, for certain reasons he felt like declining. But Houghton urged him to retain the case, and, with some misgivings, he consented. Once started, he was on his mettle, and made an argument that not only won the case, but also drew praise from the court and Judge Emery. The pleasantest result of the incident was Judge Emery's graceful and good-natured prediction of success for his opponent, — a young man, he said, who was fortunate enough to begin his active career by winning his first case and a wife on the same day. This was the way the engagement between young Hamlin and Miss Emery was formally announced. Houghton, by the way, became a great admirer of Mr. Hamlin, and named a son after him, — Hannibal Hamlin Houghton.

After their marriage, which took place on December 10, 1833, the young lawyer and his wife went to the town of Lincoln, in Penobscot County, on the advice of General Samuel F. Hersey, a native of Oxford County, one of the leading lumbermen of Maine and one of Mr. Hamlin's lifelong friends. Hamlin opened an office and transacted enough business to say that he had practiced his profession in Lincoln, when he heard that there was a better opening for him in the town of Hampden. Charles Stetson, who had begun his career in Hampden, and who was afterwards one of the leading capitalists of Maine and a member of Congress, had acquired interests that demanded his removal to Bangor. Hamlin was the first lawyer to appear on the scene as Stetson's successor, and quickly ascertained that Hampden offered him an excellent field. Hampden at that time was a thriving country town of several thousand inhabitants, with large commercial interests. It is five miles below Bangor, on the banks of the Penobscot River, one of the finest streams of water in Maine. It is also one of the oldest towns in the State, and is historical as the scene of the battle of Hampden, where a brave but ineffectual stand by a small group of untrained militia was made against British regulars in the war of 1812, who came up the Penobscot, sacking the towns on their way as far as Bangor. Hampden was a shipbuilding and farming centre when Hamlin settled there, and he found plenty of business at the outset. He took possession of a little box-like office on the principal street, hung out his sign and went to work.





HAMLIN'S LAW OFFICE.



There were many hospitable people in Hampden, and they made the new squire, as they called him, feel at home. When Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin came to this place, they first boarded at the house of Asa Matthews, master of the village academy, and a rugged old-fashioned school-teacher. He was a graduate of Waterville College, and well informed. An account he gave of Mr. Hamlin is of interest. "Hannibal Hamlin's personality," said he, "at once drew attention to him when he was twenty-four, and settled in Hampden. The first time he came into my house and stood looking at me, I knew he was an uncommon kind of a man. He stood six feet, straight as an arrow. There was about him the natural air, simplicity, and nobility of an Indian sachem. There was a great power, too, in the steadfast look of his big black eyes. I thought he was one of the finest specimens of physical manhood I ever saw. There was iron in him, but it was tempered with a big heart. He was cordial, sympathetic, and magnetic. He was always a perfectly natural man. His career strengthened his rugged character, and developed his great mind, but his success did not affect his nature. When his old friends of Hampden called on him at Washington, when he was the war Vice-President, he was as simple and natural as when he came into my house for the first time, an unknown man, little dreaming of the honorable career before him."

At the outset of his life in Hampden, Mr. Hamlin told his clients that he had several rules and principles that he should always observe. One related to money, and it became known in this way. In this period there were few banks or money collecting agencies in the country towns of Maine, and this line of business was handled chiefly by the lawyers. Mr. Hamlin was soon called on to make writs; in one year he made over three hundred. Thus he handled a good deal of money belonging to his clients, and it often happened that they did not call for it until some time after it had been collected. Mr. Hamlin, therefore, had at times considerable sums of money in his possession, and on one occasion he told a friend what disposition he made of such money and his reasons. He said:—

"When I collect money for a client, I inclose it in an addressed package, and lock the package up in my trunk until it is called for. I will not touch or use that money for my purposes under any circumstances, unless, of course, the owner should authorize it. The money belongs to the owner. I have no more right to use it, even if I could replace it in five minutes, than I would have to take money that he might happen to have in his pocketbook. A man should practice honesty in his heart and thoughts as much as in his deeds."

He not only followed this rule in all his business dealings throughout his life, but also endeavored to enforce it on others as the



correct principle to be observed in matters involving trust and confidence. It was one of the first rules or maxims he enjoined on his law students and on all of his four sons, who lived to follow his profession.

Another thing the people of Hampden learned about the new squire, before he had been among them long, was that he would frankly discourage litigation, even if he was a pecuniary loser by so doing, when he honestly thought that a case could be settled out of court by a little common-sense advice on his part. Within a year after he had settled in Hampden, Mr. Hamlin was appointed town agent, and intrusted with all its public business. His own business rapidly increased, and in several years he laid plans to build himself a home. He and his wife now had two sons, George and Charles, and looked forward with pleasure to the time when they should own their house. The only set-back Mr. Hamlin received in the beginning of his active life occurred about this time. He went on the bond of a deputy sheriff named Grant for the sum of four thousand dollars. When he was signing his name, he said in a joking way: "My friend, if you should go wrong, it might cost me my home I am building." Unfortunately this jest came true. Grant became a defaulter for a large sum of money, and his creditors looked to his bondsmen. Mr. Hamlin acted promptly. He called a meeting of some of Grant's creditors in his office, and said to them:<sup>1</sup>—

"My friends, I have lived among you only a few years, but I think you know that I keep my word. I am poor, young, and struggling for an honest support for myself. This struggle will continue right among you, my neighbors. I am unable now to meet this just debt; but if you will give me time, and God will give me strength, I will pay off every dollar I owe you, even if it takes me a lifetime to do it." As a matter of fact, it took him many years to settle this debt, for he had only his salary to live on while in public life, but he kept his promise to the last cent. "But," Mr. Hamlin added, in telling the story, "heavens! how long it kept my nose on the grindstone. Never willingly get into debt."

There was a great deal of social life in Hampden, for a village of its size, and although Mr. Hamlin worked hard he also believed in enjoying life himself. Out-of-door life was his passion. When he came to Hampden he had hardly been in the town a day before he was hunting around the country for its trout streams. Many an afternoon, when he could get away from his work, he would go off fishing for a couple of hours. At this time most of the States had compulsory militia laws, and there was, therefore, more interest in

<sup>1</sup> He related the story to S. F. Barr, representative to Congress from Pennsylvania in 1881-85.

military affairs in Maine then than now. In Hampden there were two companies, and Mr. Hamlin joined one, an independent organization called the Hampden Rifles. Incidentally, it may be said that this was the beginning of his political career. The company was composed of active, jovial young men, and when they found out the good-fellowship of their new companion they elected him captain of the company, and thereafter stuck to him throughout many a political fight. They had good times "training" in those days. A story is told of Captain Hamlin's physical agility. He and his men had attended a parade at Bangor, and returning to Hampden the men began to "skylark." When they were resting near a log fence, which reached up to an average man's chest, some one in the company shouted: "Hamlin, I'll stump you to jump over that fence without touching your hands." Dropping his sword, Hamlin was over the fence in a standing jump, without touching his hands, before another word was said. The company watched, and other men tried the same feat, but no one else could do it, and the fence was jocosely known as "Hamlin's stump."

Hamlin quickly made a reputation in Hampden as a speaker.<sup>1</sup> He had a simple, vigorous way of talking that he usually adopted, but he could be witty and sarcastic when the occasion demanded. He used to try his cases before the local justice of the peace, who was a more important functionary than now, and after a while the news that Squire Hamlin was going to argue a case always brought a crowd of farmers into the stuffy room to hear him. He also spoke frequently at the village lyceum, and on one occasion learned that he was becoming famous. A schoolmaster who heard him was strongly impressed. He met the Rev. George W. Field, then a young divinity student, and said to him: "They have a rising speaker in Hampden. His name is Hannibal Hamlin. He speaks so well that I am sure he will be elected to the legislature some day."

Hamlin's business rapidly developed, and he was often required to argue cases in Bangor. A story is told of one of the first arguments he made there, in a case that attracted considerable attention at the time on account of the prominence of one of the parties to the suit. He was a Federalist who lived in Hampden, and had undertaken to snub Hamlin because he was a Democrat, and depreciated his ability. The Federalist had a quarrel with his neighbor over the boundary line between their farms, and ultimately claimed that he was entitled to a slice of his neighbor's land. He retained a lawyer of established reputation to push his claim, while the defendant engaged Hamlin, who, after taking certain quiet steps, satisfied himself that the Federalist

<sup>1</sup> His first appearance as a public speaker was made in Hampden, on the Fourth of July, 1836.

had no right whatever to the land he was trying to get. The case was tried in Bangor. The old court-house was crowded. The Federalist's claim seemed to be established by positive testimony; but Hamlin threw a veritable bombshell into his camp by demonstrating, through an assistant he put on the stand, that he himself, a practical surveyor, had surveyed the land in dispute; that he had worked from the ancient landmark acknowledged by the Federalist, across the land, following the disputed line to the Penobscot River; that at the end of the line he had found on the ledge the original surveyor's mark, which proved beyond a doubt that the line was correct as it stood, and that the Federalist did not have a shadow of a claim to an inch of his neighbor's land. Then Hamlin turned on the exposed claimant, and arraigned him with great power and pitiless scorn as "a man who coveted his neighbor's lands." The Federalist left the court-house defeated and chagrined. In his hour of repentance he resolved to conciliate the fiery young Democrat upon whom he had hitherto affected to look down. When Hamlin returned home, he found at his house a number of choice young fruit-trees the Federalist had sent him as an olive branch of peace. Friendly relations afterward followed between the men.

Another story was told of Hamlin's shrewdness in dealing with a penurious client. The incident also illustrates his love of fun. One of the richest men of Penobscot County lived near Hampden. He was very parsimonious; in fact, his neighbors said he was "meaner than a skinflint." He sold some land one day, and being in Hampden called on Mr. Hamlin to get him to draw up the deed. He first inquired how much this transaction would cost him. Knowing the peculiarity of the old man, Mr. Hamlin thought he would see how far his meanness would carry him, and so he replied that the law allowed him seventy-five cents. Then he added:—

"Do you think that's too much?"

"Yes, yes, that's altogether too much," replied the old man, shaking his head, and contracting his thin lips.

"Well," continued Mr. Hamlin suavely, "do you think that two shillings (fifty cents) would be too much?"

"Yes," said the client, "that's too much."

"How about one shilling?" (twenty-five cents), Mr. Hamlin asked, with his blandest smile.

"Y-e-s," the old miser cautiously admitted, "one shillin' ain't too much."

Mr. Hamlin made out the deed, and when he received the shilling, he said in an apparently cordial, off-hand way:—

"Now seeing that it's you, I'll give you the deed for a shilling, and give you a treat besides. Come over to the tavern."



Mr. Hamlin ordered two glasses of the old man's favorite beverage, and paid for them with the shilling. As the client smacked his lips, his face lighted up with enthusiasm, and he broke out :—

"Squire, you air the most generoust man I ever knew. I'm going to give you my business, I'll be darned if I won't."

Now, this was not what Mr. Hamlin had been looking for, but it is an amusing fact that the old fellow became a valuable client, and afterward promptly paid Mr. Hamlin's charges without grumbling.

Another story was told at the expense of the Supreme Court of Maine, which added to the reputation of the young lawyer. The incident happened when Mr. Hamlin was a member of the town school committee. He had two colleagues, and in his absence from Hampden at one time they engaged a teacher named Jackson. Subsequently they became dissatisfied with Jackson, and dismissed him. He claimed that he had been engaged for a whole term, and sued the town for his salary for that period. The case was tried in the District Court, and went against Jackson, but he appealed for a new trial, claiming that it was not competent for two members of the committee to discharge him. Chief Justice Shepley of the Supreme Court, a man who was rarely caught tripping, upheld Jackson's contention, and ordered a new trial. When the case was tried the second time, Mr. Hamlin made the argument for the town. This is the way he made it :—

"Your honor," said he, addressing the court, "it is contended, is it not, that it was not competent for two members of the school committee to dismiss Mr. Jackson?"

"Yes, sir," replied the justice with great dignity. "The law court has so decided."

"Very well, your honor," Mr. Hamlin continued, "if it was not competent for two members of the committee to discharge Mr. Jackson, will you tell me if it was competent for the same two to employ him?" At the same time he exhibited Jackson's certificate, bearing the names of only two members of the committee.

Failure to perform military duties according to the law then was punishable by fines, and Mr. Hamlin's prominence in his company naturally brought him many cases to defend or prosecute. Eventually he was called all over the county of Penobscot to act in cases of this kind. One story is still told in a town near Bangor of his shrewdness in defending a suit against members of a company. He suspected that a family arrangement existed between four brothers to make what they could out of the compulsory military law. One brother was a justice of the peace, before whom the cases were tried against men charged with evading service. The writs were served by the second brother, who was a constable. The evidence against

alleged delinquents was furnished by a third brother, who was clerk of the military company. The cases were prosecuted by the fourth brother, who was a lawyer. The first time Mr. Hamlin was called into the case he saw at a glance that the rolls were defective, because they had not been properly made up and certified to by the officers of the company as required by law. This was a fatal flaw, and the case was thrown out of court. Three months later, to his surprise, Mr. Hamlin was again summoned to defend the same clients against the same charge. Suspecting some trick, Mr. Hamlin asked to see the company rolls. He looked at the records very carefully for a moment, and then amazed the court and the spectators in the little room by suddenly stuffing the rolls in his pocket, buttoning up his coat, and planting his back against the court-room door. Before the startled justice could gather his wits, Mr. Hamlin was in command of the situation. Pointing his finger at the clerk of the company, he said : —

"I know you to be an honest man. Now, you shall tell me the truth, and I will not leave this room until you do. Have not these rolls been doctored since I was here on this case in September? At that time there were defects in the rolls; I remember that fact because the case was thrown out of court for that reason. Yet, the same charges against my clients are renewed, and the same rolls are now produced again, but dated back. Who has supplied the certificates that were missing in September? Answer me that question?"

Completely taken by surprise, the clerk stammered : "Well, Mr. Hamlin, er, the fact is, I er — I swore to the rolls which my brother (the lawyer) handed to me the other day."

This admission caused consternation among the rest of the family ; the lawyer raved, but Mr. Hamlin continued : —

"Your brother gave you the rolls, did he? Then you signed the new certificates at his suggestion, did you not?"

A reluctant "yes" came from the alarmed clerk. At this admission Mr. Hamlin took up his hat, and opened the door, firing this parting shot : —

"This case also," said he, "is thrown out of court, and to prevent it from being resurrected I shall carry the rolls home where you cannot get them."

He did so, and the militia of this town was not troubled again by these men.

Hampden's maritime interests were comparatively large at this time, and Mr. Hamlin was eventually drawn into admiralty law. When he had built up a large practice a suggestive incident occurred. He was called to Boston to take charge of an admiralty case, and there made the acquaintance of Sidney Bartlett, who was about his own age, and was already evincing those solid qualities of mind which

placed him at the head of the Boston bar for many years. Mr. Hamlin retained Mr. Bartlett as associate counsel, and subsequently Mr. Bartlett engaged Mr. Hamlin to take charge of business for him in Maine. In the course of a few years the two young lawyers developed a profitable line of business. But it was suddenly terminated by Mr. Hamlin's election to Congress in 1843. Mr. Bartlett, it would seem, had formed a favorable opinion of Mr. Hamlin's ability as a lawyer and a liking for him as a man. When Mr. Hamlin started for Washington, to take his seat in the House, he stopped at Boston, and called on Mr. Bartlett. Now, Mr. Bartlett was perfectly devoted to the law, and had a contempt for politics. He was rather reserved and precise in his dealings with men as a rule, but when he saw his former associate, he warmed up, and to Mr. Hamlin's quiet amusement, read him a vigorous lecture on entering politics. He seemed to feel as if it were a personal grievance. In a tone of remonstrance Bartlett began :—

"Hamlin, why do you go into politics? There's nothing in political life, I tell you. You were doing well, and you should not have got yourself elected to Congress. You may stay in politics and spoil the making of a fine lawyer! Hamlin, you will have a fine career as a lawyer if you remain in your profession; I know you will. Give up politics. Stick to the 'larr,' my friend, stick to the 'larr.'"

In the following years Mr. Hamlin rarely made a visit to Boston without calling on Mr. Bartlett for a few moments. Once when he complimented the latter on his success at the bar, Bartlett replied :—

"Well, Senator, are you not sorry now you did not take my advice and remain a lawyer?"

"No," replied Mr. Hamlin, with a laugh, "but I will admit that when I entered politics I spoiled the making of a good farmer."

Mr. Hamlin's early entrance into political life and its engrossing duties soon withdrew him from his profession, and when he had been fairly settled in the Senate he had to relinquish all thought of resuming the practice of law. He did not, therefore, develop his legal possibilities, and in after life there naturally was no little speculation as to the rank he would have attained at the bar. Sidney Bartlett's opinion is suggestive. It was also recalled by a witty practitioner in considering this, that Mr. Hamlin's success in winning cases during his connection with the bar, which was regarded as remarkable, entitled him to a share in the story told of Rufus Choate by a farmer jurymen : "He seemed to have the luck to be always on the right side." But this brief phase is best summed up in the words of John A. Peters, the distinguished Chief Justice of Maine, who knew him as a lawyer, congressman, and friend :—



"There can be no doubt that Mr. Hamlin would have attained high position as a lawyer, had not a strong natural taste for public life allured him from the practice of his profession. He naturally possessed a happy combination of the qualities that command success at the bar, quickness and clearness of perception, conciseness of thought and expression, discrimination, an intuitive insight into the motives of others, industry and earnestness, and a personal magnetism which made him acceptable to all classes of men. And at the bottom, on which this superstructure of character could most firmly rest, was a strong, natural love of justice, a high order of integrity, and rare common sense. We may well remember with pride that Hannibal Hamlin was a member of our bar." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eulogy, Penobscot Bar Association, October 25, 1891. See other remarks by Albert W. Paine, S. F. Humphrey, Daniel F. Davis, and Eugene Hale.

## CHAPTER VI

### HAMLIN IN THE LEGISLATURE

THE state and county musters were the great events of the year in Maine and other States, at this period. There was a good deal of rivalry between the various crack companies of Maine, and the approach of muster day stirred up more excitement among the men and boys than the coming of a circus to country towns does nowadays. The day before the muster towns were alive with moving troops on their way to the grounds. On the great day itself the muster place in the morning was a scene of arriving troops and soldiers marching and drilling. In the afternoon came the sham fight, with enough noise and dust for a real battle. Then the hungry soldiers charged on scores of booths that fringed the field, "stocked with enough food to feed an army, and enough liquids to float a navy," as the saying was. The absence of women was significant. Jamaica rum and punch were circulated in great quantities. The scene became hilarious. Barn doors were thrown down on the ground. Fiddlers scraped for men to dance. The double shuffle was a favorite step, the fore and aft a popular dance. Men jigged each other and the fiddlers down, and when the sun was sinking it lighted the way home for an hilarious crowd, marching and singing behind the heroes of the day.

The muster attracted the politicians, and they gathered to discuss candidates, and lay their wires. Two years after Hamlin came to Hampden, the rifle company, which he captained at the county muster, in 1835, proposed him as the Democratic candidate for the legislature, to represent Hampden and the associated towns of Newburgh, Orrington, and others. He was duly nominated at the regular caucus, and then entered upon his first campaign. This is of historical rather than personal interest, since it relates to the rise and formation of political parties in Maine. From 1820 to 1829 party lines in Maine were not strictly drawn in the state elections. In 1829 the ascendancy of the Jackson Democracy was felt, and Jackson's followers there made a campaign on state issues. They were designated as the Democratic-Republican party, and their opponents as National Republicans. The Democrats were beaten by a small majority; but the next year they carried the State, and, with the exception of an occasional defeat, controlled its government until 1856. In 1833, the

year in which Mr. Hamlin settled in Hampden and began to take an active interest in politics, the opponents of the Democratic-Republican party formally took the name of Whigs, and the Jackson party began to be known simply as Democrats.

At this time the Democratic party was most powerful in Maine. The year Mr. Hamlin was elected to the legislature, Robert P. Dunlap, the Democratic candidate for governor, received over 45,000 votes to only 18,000 for William King, the Whig candidate, the first governor of Maine, and a man of great personal popularity and ability. Party principle prevailed, and it is easy to see why the Democratic party was then supreme. First, it was truly the party of the people. This was because it was loyal to the principles of Jefferson and Jackson, and these were the safest for the young nation to follow in its formative period. They embodied a strict construction of the Constitution, and hence guaranteed the largest latitude of liberty to the individual citizen that was compatible with the welfare of society, while demanding thorough enforcement of the laws and maintenance of the government. The Democrats of this period looked on the Constitution as the Bible of their faith, because it gave the American people the best form of popular government yet given to mankind, and secured for the individual his personal liberty. The Democrats, therefore, opposed paternal legislation and centralization; they regarded the Whigs as the lineal descendants of the Federalists, whom they believed to have been monarchists at heart. They also believed in a low tariff for revenue only. Another thing to be credited to the party of Jefferson and Jackson was that it was the progressive and aggressive party of its day, the Whigs being the conservative element. While it did not have as many intellectual leaders as the Whigs did, it generally took the lead in cutting out the issues of the day. In several respects it embodied the life of the growing country in a striking manner. It was imbued with belief in the manifest destiny of the nation. To the Democratic party the country owes the acquisition of the Louisiana territory, under Jefferson, the opening up of the West under Jackson, the annexation of Texas, and the saving of Oregon from the British government. At this time it had the young blood of the day, and was the dominant party of the country.

Hamlin supported the principles of Jefferson and Jackson from conviction, and was in full accord with his party in its dominant ideas, although he believed in specific duties in connection with a tariff for revenue. New England was then a commercial centre, and many of her public men grew with her interests, and evolved naturally into protectionists when New England developed her great manufacturing possibilities. Hamlin was also attracted to the Democratic party partly on account of his democratic nature and aggressive disposition.



He thoroughly believed in the American people, and he was a born fighter for their rights. He enjoyed a contest, and entered on this campaign with zest. He was easily elected, and took his seat in the House of Representatives in the following winter.

The key to Hannibal Hamlin's political success is to be found in his legislative training and experience. He remained in the Maine legislature five successive years, and there he not only familiarized himself with legislation and parliamentary procedure, but also built up lifelong friendships that were as a rock for him to stand on in his long and arduous fight against the slave power, which is the most important service he rendered to his country and State. But at this time slavery was not an issue. The parties were divided on strictly party issues, and Mr. Hamlin's services in the legislature are interesting chiefly in showing his capacity for work and his grasp of public questions in the first stages of his political career. In point of ability, character, and individual success the legislature of 1835 was not equaled by any other body that met at Augusta in Mr. Hamlin's lifetime. The Democrats were in control. The Speaker was Jonathan Cilley, a promising man, classmate of Longfellow and Hawthorne at Bowdoin, who was killed in a duel while a member of Congress. Another leading member of the House was John Holmes, of Alfred, who had been a member of the United States Senate. Henry W. Paine, afterwards one of the leaders of the Boston bar, was then a Whig representative of Hallowell. Another lawyer who stood well up in his profession was Samuel Wells, a Democrat, who became governor and a member of the Supreme Court of Maine. The leader of the Whigs in the House was Elisha H. Allen, of Bangor, a graduate of Williams College, who afterwards was a member of Congress, chief justice of the Hawaiian government, and finally its minister to this country. Rufus McIntire, of Parsonsfield, Stephen C. Foster, of Pembroke, and Virgil D. Parris, then of Buckfield, were also subsequently members of Congress. Dr. Ezekiel Holmes, of Winthrop, achieved a national reputation as a naturalist and a writer on agricultural and educational subjects. There were also other men in the House who attained some prominence in the legislature, the governor's council, or the business affairs of the State. Among them was Moses Emery, of Saco, a sound lawyer and a clear observer of public affairs; Stephen P. Brown, a pioneer woolen manufacturer of Dover; William Conner, of Fairfield; Eliakim Scammon, of Pittston; William D. Sewall, of Bath; and Wales Hubbard, of Wiscasset. In the Senate, over which Josiah Pierce, of Gorham, presided, Luther Severance and Samuel P. Benson were future congressmen. Tobias Purrington was a powerful leader in the movement to abolish capital punishment. One who was long a picturesque figure in the politics of Maine was John C. Talbot, of East Machias.

There was a strong rivalry for the leadership on the floor of the House, and as this was a time of intense partisanship, many a rough and tumble fight took place in debate with exchanges of personalities. The Whigs prided themselves on the superior intellectual attainments of their leaders ; the Democrats prided themselves on the democracy of theirs. Hamlin's associates of these days said that he at once stepped to the front, and became the recognized leader of his party on the floor of the House. Naturally his marked individuality, swarthy face, and vigorous way of speaking attracted attention to him. Finally, his ardent championship of Democracy involved him in several pitched battles. One story has been preserved that shows the personal nature of the times. Some of the old leaders were a little jealous of the newcomer's sudden ascendancy, and of these John Holmes was one. He had been in the United States Senate for a dozen years, and was at one time famous as a speaker of great powers of sarcasm and humor, though of a rude quality. In the Senate John Tyler once sneeringly asked Holmes what had become of the famous political firm John Randolph had discovered : James Madison, Felix Grundy, John Holmes, and the Devil. Holmes withered Tyler by retorting : "The first is dead, the second is in retirement, the third now addresses the Senate, and the fourth has gone over to the Nullifiers, and is electioneering among the gentleman's constituents." Holmes was a free lance in this House, and tried to domineer over it. Hamlin disputed the leadership with him, and Holmes attempted to crush his young opponent by coarsely ridiculing his swarthy countenance. This was an unfortunate move for Holmes. Instantly Hamlin jumped to his feet, and pointing his finger at Holmes he retorted : "If the gentleman chooses to find fault with me on account of my complexion, what has he to say about himself ? I take my complexion from nature ; he gets his from the brandy bottle. Which is more honorable ?" This fierce thrust at Holmes's unfortunate failing brought out a shout from the House. The fact was, the members of the House were glad to see so brave a young David fell the Goliath of the House at one blow. There were cries of "Go on !" Pointing his finger at Holmes, Hamlin continued : "I will also tell the member from Alfred that he is more conspicuous for trying to ride rough shod over young men than for trying to encourage them. He never extends a hand to them as they begin to toil up the rugged path of life ; he has not even a kind word for them. But as long as they are true to themselves and to nature, and as long as the member of Alfred sticks to the brandy bottle, they need not fear him." The House cheered again, and Holmes, realizing that he had fairly brought down this fierce denunciation on his head, took the floor, retracted his words, and made a manly apology. Then there was peace.

"The young Carthaginian routed the old Roman," was one humorous comment on the incident, and then Hamlin was known and called the Carthaginian of Maine, a name that stuck to him throughout life.

But the encounter with John Holmes was one of the few exceptions to the general attitude Mr. Hamlin maintained towards his political opponents and party associates. Elisha H. Allen, the leader of the Whigs, became one of Mr. Hamlin's best personal friends through their intercourse in the legislature, and often in after years attributed much of Mr. Hamlin's success to courtesy, kindness, tact, and unwillingness to allow the incidents of party strife to interfere with his personal relations. Mr. Allen himself was a high-bred man, of social and scholarly inclinations. He had a polished address and a bright way of talking that made him a favorite speaker and visitor in political and social circles in Maine and at Washington, where he lived many years as the dean of the diplomatic corps at the national Capitol. One incident Mr. Allen related will illustrate his ideas of Mr. Hamlin's sense of courtesy and personal obligations to his friends and associates. At the request of a Portland editor Mr. Hamlin wrote some sketches of his fellow-members of the House. Feeling some delicacy about writing up Mr. Allen, who was his political rival on the floor of the House, Mr. Hamlin asked another member to do it, supposing that he had the right ideas of the courtesy to which Mr. Allen was justly entitled. The day the article appeared Mr. Hamlin did not see it until after he entered the House. To his utter amazement Mr. Allen cut him with a freezing look, and refused to return his greeting.

"Why, Allen," exclaimed Mr. Hamlin, "what is the matter? Why do you treat me like this? I demand to know the reason; it is my right to know it."

The newspaper that contained the sketch of Mr. Allen, written at Mr. Hamlin's request, was silently handed to him, and to his great chagrin and displeasure he found over the *nom de plume* he had used in writing, a virulent and utterly unpardonable attack on Mr. Allen as the leader of the Whigs.

"Good heavens, Allen!" Mr. Hamlin ejaculated, "I did not write this awful thing; you did not believe that I did, did you?"

"Knowing you, Hamlin," Allen replied with some emotion, "I could not believe you capable of such a thing; but the *nom de plume* misled me. Your word, however, is sufficient, and here is my hand. I am glad, very glad, that you acted so promptly, and prevented any further misunderstanding where another man might have allowed my pardonable error to have gone unexplained, owing to my natural resentment."

A hearty handshake followed. Then Mr. Hamlin insisted on ex-



plaining how the article happened to be written, taking upon himself the moral responsibility for it. In the mean time Whigs and Democrats in the House were reading and discussing the matter, with the result that the Whigs were incensed, while some of the bitter partisans among the Democrats were inclined to chuckle over the unmerciful lashing Mr. Allen had received. Mr. Hamlin at once went among the members of the House, and, without naming the author of the article, and accepting the blame attached, strongly condemned it as unmanly and totally unjustified. Both Whigs and Democrats were greatly pleased with Mr. Hamlin's action, and the affair ended there.

At the beginning of the session Speaker Cilley appointed Mr. Hamlin to several of the most important committees of the House. They dealt with questions that were looming up like dark clouds on the political horizon, and, therefore, absorbed a great deal of the legislature's attention. Several incidents occurred that revealed Mr. Hamlin's character while meeting new experiences. His colleagues of this day said that he soon earned the reputation of a worker, and never refused to face any problem. One question that was now constantly coming up in the legislatures, and frightening the time-serving politicians of that body, was slavery. The situation was interesting. There was a growing friction between the Abolitionists and the slaveholders that threatened to produce serious trouble. A favorite method the Abolitionists had of agitating was to flood Congress and Northern legislatures with petitions for the abolition of the peculiar institution. The slave party retaliated by passing the infamous gag-law in Congress, which prohibited the reception of anti-slavery petitions by that body, and also by sending remonstrances to Northern legislatures against abolition agitation. While the majority of people in Maine abhorred slavery, they nevertheless deplored the methods of the Abolitionists as likely to cause trouble without affording any remedy for the evil. There was also a small, but increasing faction in the Democratic party of Maine, composed chiefly of Federal office-holders, who frowned on any attack on slavery; in fact, in their eyes criticism of slavery was criticism of the Constitution itself. For did not the Constitution guarantee protection to the institution? Under the circumstances, the Abolitionists had but little encouragement in Maine, and found a rather chilly atmosphere at Augusta.

Mr. Hamlin was a member of the committee that received the petitions and remonstrances relating to slavery. There were some pretty stiff pro-slavery men in the House, and they insisted that the abolition memorials should be rejected, while time-serving members insinuated that it would be easy to smother them. One incident of interest in connection with this was Mr. Hamlin's action when both open and covert opposition was shown to the abolition petitions.

He insisted that it was the committee's duty to receive and report the petitions, and made a speech when the matter was brought before the House. He did not believe in the Abolitionists, but it incensed him to find that the gag-law had supporters in Maine. He spoke out his mind freely, and enunciated his anti-slavery principles and feelings about the Abolitionists, and adhered to these principles with perfect consistency to the end. The substance of the speech was well remembered by those who heard it, and was noted in newspapers of the day. It was on precisely the same lines as speeches Mr. Hamlin made subsequently on the stump and in Congress. He said :—

“I am opposed to slavery, and I will fight it if it becomes a menace to the liberty and welfare of our common country. I hope slavery will be abolished, but the Constitution could not be adopted without the recognition of slavery, and the free States are bound to maintain their sacred constitutional obligations. I believe slavery to be an evil entailed on us by the mother country, and we must do the best with it we can under the circumstances. In the words of Pinckney, ‘Slavery blights all that it touches,’ and as it is now a local trouble, we should try to confine it within as narrow a compass as possible to prevent it from spreading. It may die out, but God is sure in his own good way and time to put an end to it. It is a curse, a moral wrong, and hurts those who support it more than it benefits them. But the Abolitionists have a right to be heard. They are citizens of this country. They have the rights of free speech guaranteed them by the Constitution.”

These declarations were practically the platform of the anti-slavery party until events set in motion by the slave power morally relieved the North from its constitutional obligations to tolerate slavery where it had originally existed. Yet in 1836 they were interpreted by the pro-slavery Democrats of Maine as an assault on the “Divine Institution.” This speech irritated them, and they looked on the young Democrat of Hampden with disfavor. They were not numerous or well enough organized to make serious trouble at that time. But in their councils they denounced Hamlin, and began to oppose him. Thus the lines of cleavage were then faintly indicated in Maine which split the two parties asunder twenty years later, and with this incident begins the long and close struggle Mr. Hamlin had with the slave power, which is the most important service he rendered the country and State, and the most picturesque chapter in his life.

While this was an era of agitation, it was also an age of reforms. A movement that was creating widespread interest was to secure cheap postage and better government mail service. The postal service was in its infancy, and the cost of correspondence was excessive. It cost even twenty-five cents to send a letter of only one sheet over four hundred miles through the mail; and with the increased service

of the railroad and steamboat lines high rates of postage prevailed. Some relief was afforded in different parts of the country by express companies, which did a thriving business by carrying mail at lower rates than the government. In Maine, the mail service, necessarily of limited facilities, was accomplished chiefly by the old-fashioned stage-coach, and the people, therefore, were very desirous of a reform. This movement enlisted Mr. Hamlin's sympathies. He offered a resolution in the House that throws further light on the means for transporting mail within the State, and also the existing difficulties. It instructed the Committee on Railroads to inquire into the expediency of amending the general laws regulating the railroads so as to enable the Postmaster-General to compel a railroad to carry government mail whenever he required it to do so. The resolution was adopted, and from this time on Mr. Hamlin gave a great deal of attention to postal reform. Without anticipating, it may be added, he took his seat in the House at Washington the year the movement achieved practical success.

The legislature was a theatre that reflected the dark side of life as well as its political and business affairs. A touching and distressing circumstance, revealed to the legislature, was the condition of some old soldiers of the war of independence. Mr. Hamlin had found them living in poverty, although they were the victims of accident rather than of willful neglect. Maine had furnished more than her quota of soldiers in the war of the Revolution, and some who had suffered wounds had become dependent on the bounty of the State and their friends, through the government's inability to provide properly for them after the close of the war. They were independent old patriots, and greatly saddened to be regarded as objects of charity or pensioners. Their condition demanded relief, and Mr. Hamlin induced the legislature to increase their bounties to fifty dollars a year, which was the limit the State could then afford. This was not much, but it was an improvement, and a step in the right direction, and in the end it had a good result. The legislature, once becoming interested in the old soldiers, considered further measures proposed for their relief. At the next session, Mr. Hamlin offered a resolution increasing the land grants to the veterans from two to six hundred acres, and exempted them from taxation. The bill was adopted, and the veterans passed their last days in comparative comfort.

A fight then broke out between the Whigs and Democrats of Maine that is now historical, and which also served to push Mr. Hamlin more prominently before the people as a leader of his party. It happened to be a period of extraordinary expansion, and one consequence was that there was a strong land speculative craze in various parts of the country. Some States made a reckless use of public



money in building railroads along routes where towns did not yet exist. Illinois was, perhaps, the worst sufferer of all in this respect. It was the Whig policy to favor internal improvements; and at this time it is an interesting fact that Abraham Lincoln, then a Whig member of the Illinois legislature, was supporting his party. Lincoln's honesty and candor, in accepting his share of the responsibility for the catastrophe that overtook his State, were characteristic of the man. Maine felt the trend of affairs, and the Whigs advocated the building of a railroad from Wiscasset and other seaport towns to Quebec, by the aid of state money, and their plan stirred up a great deal of excitement at the time.

The general policy of the Democratic party was to oppose the use of public money in aid of any enterprise that could be promoted through individual effort. The scheme savored of paternal legislation, and then, again, far-sighted business men saw that a reaction would follow the abnormal conditions of affairs described. Mr. Hamlin attacked the Wiscasset railroad plan in several speeches before the legislature. His reasons briefly stated were, that his party principles were opposed to the scheme; that Maine was a poor State and could not afford the money; that the promotion of such a plan might bring on a fever of land speculation, such as was raging in other States; that, finally, it was more or less of a Whig scheme, which, if realized, might become in their hands a dangerous piece of machinery that would enable them to get a firm grip on the state government. This provoked a fierce discussion, but in the end the Democrats triumphed and killed the bill. Not yet feeling quite secure against the temptations of speculation and paternal legislation, Mr. Hamlin, at a subsequent session of the legislature, led a movement that secured the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution of Maine prohibiting the State from increasing its debt over \$300,000.

This prudent legislation saved Maine to the Democrats in the fall elections of 1837. This was a year of disastrous panics and depression in business. As a consequence, a reaction set in against the National Democratic party that reached high tide three years later in the election of Harrison to the presidency. In Maine, Governor Dunlap was reelected, and the legislature was once more controlled by the Democrats. Mr. Hamlin's leadership, in the preceding House, made him his party's logical candidate for speaker, and he was elected, being at that time twenty-eight years old, the youngest man yet to fill the speaker's chair. Elisha H. Allen, still the Whig leader, was his competitor. Among the leading members of this House were Rufus K. Goodenow, a Whig, of Paris, and a member of Congress in 1849; the Rev. Ebenezer Knowlton, of Montville, who was one of Maine's first Republican congressmen; Alfred Reddington, of

Augusta, a lifelong friend of the Speaker, and adjutant-general of the State in 1849; Atwood Levensaler, a powerful Democratic leader in the shipbuilding district of Thomaston, and always Mr. Hamlin's personal friend; Randolph A. L. Codman, a promising lawyer of Portland; Ralph C. Johnson, of Belfast, and Joshua Lowell, of East Machias. Over the Senate presided N. S. Littlefield, a Democrat of Bridgton, who served in the Twenty-seventh and Thirty-first Congresses. In the governor's council was another lifelong friend of Mr. Hamlin's, General Samuel Veazie, a leading banker of Maine, and one of that patriotic group of financiers who, at the outbreak of the civil war, came forward and offered the government large loans to meet its immediate needs in confronting the crisis.

One of Speaker Hamlin's first acts was to give a hearing to a number of students at Waterville College, who had started a movement to abolish capital punishment in Maine, and wanted an opportunity to present their arguments to the legislature. The times and conditions were hardly favorable for such a movement, but the young men were very earnest, and determined to make a beginning at least. The death penalty was then the law of every State in the Union and of every nation. In the United States it was generally upheld as a necessity, and supported by a conservative religious elements in the belief that it was sanctioned by the Bible. One of the students was J. Young Scammon, then of Bath, who, as a young man, was giving promise of great talents. In subsequent years he ranked among the first men at the Chicago bar, and was a Republican leader of note in Illinois. Scammon at once impressed himself on Mr. Hamlin as a sincere and able young man, and he obtained for the student a hearing before the Judiciary Committee. He gave close attention to their arguments; it was the first time the subject of the death penalty had ever been pressed on him for his consideration and action. His inclinations were against it, and now that he gave his thoughts to it, he saw it in the light of a reproach to civilization. To the great pleasure of the college boys he warmly indorsed their views, and when the Judiciary Committee agreed to report favorably, Mr. Hamlin promised that he would present the bill to the House and make a speech. He told Scammon that "he had enlisted in this war to win."<sup>1</sup> He made a speech that stirred up a vigorous discussion throughout the State. He never lost interest in the matter. He wanted to see the death penalty abolished by civilized nations, and in his family and among

<sup>1</sup> It is an interesting coincidence that, practically, Mr. Hamlin's first act as the official representative of his party, and his last appearance before the legislature of Maine, just half a century afterwards, were in opposition to capital punishment. The law was repealed in 1887 for the last time, after a short revival, as a result of his plea. Thus he literally fulfilled his promise to J. Young Scammon.

his friends spoke with a good deal of feeling against the law of capital punishment. He adhered to the same views he presented before the legislature in 1837. His general argument was as follows:<sup>1</sup>—

“I am opposed to capital punishment on general humane principles, and also because it does not serve as a deterrent; finally, because it is not in accordance with the great and fundamental truths of the Sacred Book. The world has become more merciful and kinder since the coming of Christ. It is learning to prefer his teachings, ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself’ and ‘Return good for evil,’ to the law of Moses, ‘An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.’ The world, also, better understands the frailties of mankind and the laws of heredity. Capital punishment is now inflicted chiefly for two offenses against God and man,—murder and treason. But death was once the penalty for several scores of offenses in England, including even petty larceny. It is on record that a woman was once hanged in London for stealing bread for her starving children.

“That was truly said to be an age of barbarism, and we would not sanction these barbarous acts. Capital punishment belongs to that age; it is, indeed, a relic of barbarism, and a blot on our progressive civilization. It ought to be wiped out. It is not a deterrent because it does not deter. The lessons of history teach us that executions draw crowds of morbid curiosity-seekers, and act as an incentive to the unfortunates who are naturally depraved to commit crime. It is the duty of society to protect itself, not to take revenge. Men who have taken lives should be immured and kept apart from society. With only their thoughts for company, their punishment is more terrible than death. The prospect of solitary confinement, without hope of pardon, might act as a stronger deterrent on habitual criminals, who see in their execution a chance to glory in their brutal notoriety. But the history of criminal jurisprudence also teaches us that criminals do not always consider the penalty for their acts. An unfortunate man may lead a criminal life on account of bad associations in his youth. Society ought to consider these things, and give him the benefit of corrective influences.

“The argument that capital punishment is sanctioned by the Bible is inconsistent with the spirit of that holy book and the teachings of Christ. The thing about the Bible that impresses me most is that it teems with love for humanity. Christ is the one great and divine figure in that Book, and do we not take our teachings from him? He is the one we believe in all things, for he is the Son of God. Moses was not, and why should we follow his commands in this matter? Moses said God commanded him to kill a man for working on Sun-

<sup>1</sup> This was reproduced from memory, but is believed to be literally correct.—C. H.



day. Does mankind believe that? The Old Testament also says: 'When a man has taken a wife, and it comes to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes, then let him give her a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hands and send her out of his house.' What would become of our modern society if we lived up to that? Suppose we lived verbatim up to the command, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'? All that take life, whether in self-defense or in the heat of passion, would come under that penalty. Moses did not discriminate, but society does discriminate, for it draws the line between murder and manslaughter. Thus it rejects the exact letter of Moses' teachings, although there are those who insist that in inflicting capital punishment society literally interprets the Scriptures. They have as little authority for claiming this as they have for justifying capital punishment on the saying, 'Whosoever shall shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' That saying is doubted by some of the greatest students of the Bible. The original can be translated a dozen different ways. But, to my way of thinking, the whole question, from a Biblical point of view, is that it is more Christian to follow the merciful Christ than the revengeful Moses. Christ never justified the taking of life.

"The most terrible thing society can do is to hang an innocent man. But it has done that awful thing more than once. Let us remember what that good and great soldier and statesman, Lafayette, said: 'Not until you can prove the infallibility of human tribunals, will I approve the justice of capital punishment.'"

The result of the agitation of capital punishment in 1837 was, that a moral victory was won by the passing of a law that dated the execution of a criminal convicted of murder one year after his sentence had been pronounced on him, and also requiring the governor to issue the death warrant. There was a steady growth of sentiment after this in favor of repealing the statute, and the law was subsequently abolished, to be revived by a small majority vote in the legislature in 1883, and finally revoked four years afterwards.

For several years there had been trouble brewing over the boundary line between Maine and New Brunswick, and this year it threatened to bring on serious consequences. In the preceding legislature, Mr. Hamlin served on the committee that had this question in charge for Maine, and by familiarizing himself with the facts of the case at that time he was now able to act and speak with authority. There was a growing friction between the inhabitants of Maine and New Brunswick, along the disputed territory, and far-seeing men in Maine believed that, unless the government took steps to settle the dispute, there might be danger of national complications. One of the first things Mr. Hamlin did, after taking the speaker's chair, was to appoint

a committee to investigate the situation in coöperation with a committee from the Senate. The two parties in Maine were entirely in accord on the Northeastern boundary question, and passed a resolution authorizing Governor Dunlap to call on President Van Buren to have the boundary line explored and surveyed, and monuments erected in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of 1783. But the national administration failed to see the necessity of acting. In putting the matter off, the government allowed Maine's interests to become entangled with other affairs, which were bunched together, so to speak, and settled at a cost to the State, under the Ashburton treaty of 1842, of 1,200,000 acres of land.

But, not to anticipate further, although the government was slothful, not understanding the watchfulness of the British diplomat, the legislature of Maine was on the alert. Plans were discussed and pushed for constructing military roads through the County of Aroostook to the scene of contention, and for providing the State with adequate coast defense. Mr. Hamlin enlisted in this work with a great deal of interest. He came to the conclusion that the country needed a thorough system of coast defense, and when he entered the United States Senate strongly urged the government to protect the country in this way. But nothing came from the military preparations the government made this year, and the legislature adjourned without leaving anything else to be recorded of public or personal interest.

The tide was still running against the Democracy on account of the panics of 1837, and this year the Whigs elected their candidate for governor, Edward Kent, of Bangor, over Gorham Parks, a former Democratic congressman from the same city, by a plurality of less than five hundred votes. The Whigs also carried the House in Maine by a substantial majority. This campaign became historic, and Governor Kent attained a national prominence. He was an able, scholarly man, a graduate of Harvard, very popular personally, and well qualified to sit in the Senate. He did not desire a national career, however, and declined a post in President Taylor's Cabinet in 1848, although he did accept the consulship at Rio Janeiro, and later in life was a member of the Supreme Court of Maine. Governor Kent, on taking the executive chair, at once applied himself with zeal to the Northeastern boundary question, to bring about a settlement if possible. To quote Israel Washburn, Jr., Maine's war governor: "Governor Kent knew more about this question than anybody else in the country."

The Whigs organized the House, and elected Elisha H. Allen speaker over Mr. Hamlin, who returned to the floor as the leader of his party. In this legislature, Mr. Hamlin made some strong friends.

In the House was John Searle Tenney, then a Whig, of Norridgewock, who subsequently became chief justice of Maine. Abner Coburn, of Skowhegan, was later governor of the State, and is remembered also for his substantial and practical philanthropy. Ebenezer Webster, of Orono, was one of the leading lumbermen of Penobscot County, and always a close friend of Mr. Hamlin's. George F. Patten was a large shipbuilder of Bath. John West, of Franklin, was one of the first men President Lincoln appointed to office under the revenue law. At Mr. Hamlin's request, Mr. Lincoln made Mr. West collector of internal revenue, in spite of the fact that the entire Maine congressional delegation had united in support of another man. Richard H. Vose was a prominent lawyer of Augusta. Noah Barker, of Exeter, was afterward state land agent. N. S. Littlefield still presided over the Senate, which the Democrats controlled. Among Mr. Hamlin's friends in that body were Daniel Emery, of Hampden, and Job Prince, of Turner. Timothy Boutelle, Thomas Robinson, and Benjamin Randall, leading lawyers of that period, were other prominent members of the Senate.

The depression in business following the panic caused a great deal of suffering among the poor people in the country, and in Maine a peculiar condition of affairs existed that would not be tolerated to-day. The poor-debtor law had some technical features that enabled shysters and Shylocks to take unfair advantages of men in debt at a cost of unnecessary suffering and expenditure of money. There were some hard-hearted men, who made a practice of issuing a writ, arresting a debtor and clapping him in jail before he could take advantage of the law that was framed for the poor debtor's benefit. It happened that some deserving men, who would have paid off their debts in time, were thrown into prison by shysters in order that the latter might get business. A great deal of complaint was heard, and when some distressing cases came to Mr. Hamlin's personal knowledge, he went to work to prevent this gross misuse of the law. He incorporated his ideas in a bill, and presented them in a speech, sternly denouncing the causes of the misery. Legislatures are conservative bodies, and while Mr. Hamlin made a good beginning in this House, he did not wholly accomplish the reform he desired until the next legislature met. He succeeded then to his satisfaction, and chapters 366 and 412, Statutes of 1839, and chapter 58 of the Statutes of 1840, embody the results of his work.

As the state campaign of 1838 approached, the Democratic party resolved to make a supreme effort to win. Mr. Hamlin appears to have come into the councils of his party soon after he was elected to the legislature. One of the men talked of as the Democratic candidate for governor was John Fairfield, of Saco. Mr. Hamlin knew



Mr. Fairfield well, and not only advocated his nomination, but organized the eastern part of Maine in his interests. Mr. Fairfield had been reporter of decisions of the Supreme Court of Maine, and was now serving his second term in Congress. He was able, far-seeing, upright, and a decided power in his party. Mr. Hamlin believed that Mr. Fairfield had a future before him, and might have a national career.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fairfield was nominated by the Democracy, and in an exciting campaign was elected over Governor Kent by about three thousand plurality. The Democrats also carried the legislature, and reelected Mr. Hamlin speaker over his friend Mr. Allen. In this legislature there were also men who attained some distinction in Maine. Joseph G. Cole, Mr. Hamlin's former law preceptor, was a leading member of the House. A man of promise was Charles Andrews, of Turner. He read law with Mr. Hamlin, who encouraged him to enter politics. He became speaker of the House in 1843, was elected to Congress in 1850, but died during his term. Ezra B. French, of Nobleboro, was a member of the Thirty-sixth Congress, and afterwards second auditor of the United States Treasury Department. Shepherd Cary, of Houlton, served one term in Congress. W. B. S. Moor, of Waterville, was elected attorney-general of Maine in 1843, and was a member of the United States Senate by appointment for a session. Other members, well known in Maine at the time, and among Mr. Hamlin's friends, were Samuel Dyer, of Sebago, and Lyman Rawson, of Rumford. In the Senate were Isaac Reed, of Waldoboro, Hiram Belcher, of Farmington, and Hezekiah Williams, of Castine, all of whom were subsequently members of Congress. Job Prince, president of the Senate, and Charles Holden, an able journalist of Portland, were among Mr. Hamlin's closest friends, and with him joined the Republican party in 1856.

Party lines now became more strongly defined in Maine. Governor Fairfield led off at the opening of the session with a message in opposition to internal improvements as a national measure, and taking no less strong grounds upon the boundary question than did Governor Kent. He said in part :—

“The general government must soon feel it to be its unavoidable duty to insist upon a termination of this question—peaceably, if possible, but at all events and at all hazards to see it terminated. If, however, the general government, under no circumstances, should be disposed to take the lead in measures less pacific than those hitherto pursued, yet, I trust, we are not remediless. If Maine should take possession of her territory up to

<sup>1</sup> During the few years Mr. Fairfield was in the Senate, he impressed his party as a strong man. He received a large vote for Vice-President in the Democratic National Convention of 1844. His sudden death in 1848 cut short a promising career.

the line of the treaty of 1783, resolved to maintain it with all the force she is capable of exerting, any attempt on the part of the British government to wrest that possession from her must bring the general government to her aid and defense, if the solemn obligations of the Constitution of the United States are to be regarded as of any validity. This step, however, is only to be taken after matured deliberation. Once taken it should never be abandoned."

Governor Fairfield was warranted in taking this strong tone in his message. In a short time after the governor had defined the position of Maine towards the disputed territory, the State was electrified at the news that a large body of Canadians were robbing the disputed land of its timber. The governor promptly ordered Sheriff Hastings Strickland, of Penobscot County, to organize a posse of men and drive out the intruders. Great excitement prevailed, and an unmistakable war fever arose. With two hundred men the sheriff rapidly proceeded to the scene of action in what is now Aroostook County. The Canadians heard of the sheriff's movements, and possessing themselves of arms in the province arsenal in Woodstock, they prepared, three hundred strong, to stand their ground. But when the Canadians heard that the Americans had a cannon they fled, and, as luck would have it, Land Agent McIntire went after them. He and his men captured twenty poachers, but the same night a body of Canadians dropped down on Mr. McIntire, and carried him and his men off to Woodstock. Maine and New Brunswick began to arm themselves. The legislature appropriated \$800,000, and the governor ordered a draft of 10,000 men to protect our claims. Congress appropriated \$10,000,000, and authorized the President to call for 50,000 volunteers to help Maine. General Scott came to Augusta to take charge of the military operations. He opened up diplomatic negotiations between Governor Fairfield and Governor John Harvey, of New Brunswick, with the result that each promised to withdraw his forces from the disputed territory, and leave it in charge of a peace posse until a settlement should be arrived at by diplomatic methods.

Thus ended the famous Aroostook war. It was a bloodless affair, and yet it was a narrow escape from a collision between the two governments. Both sides were prepared to fight, and the loss of a single life might have prevented a peaceful settlement. The wonder is that no harm came out of all that excitement and manœuvring. As a major on Governor Fairfield's staff, Mr. Hamlin was ready to take the field. With Lincoln he could have said in after years that he, too, had a military record, and told a humorous story of the war that was never fought.

Mr. Hamlin was reelected to the House in the fall of 1839, and chosen speaker for the third time. In this House were some new

members who were among Mr. Hamlin's closest friends and political associates. Among them were General John J. Perry, of Oxford, a lawyer and afterwards member of the Thirty-sixth Congress; William C. Hammatt, of Howland, a man of uncommon political sagacity for his circumstances; Philip A. Eastman, of Strong, and a judge of probate of Franklin County; Joseph W. Eaton, of Plymouth; Dennis L. Milliken, of Burnham; Aaron P. Emerson, of Orland; S. R. Lyman, of Portland, and William Delesdernier, long a unique character in the politics of Washington County. Samuel Trafton, of Cornish, and Joseph Dane, of Hollis, Mr. Hamlin always remembered as faithful friends and legislators. Ebenezer Everett, a Whig, of Brunswick, was a sound lawyer and a member of the State's commission to revise its statutes. He was the father of the Rev. Dr. Charles Carroll Everett, for many years dean of the Unitarian Theological School of Harvard University. Edward O'Brien, one of Maine's largest shipbuilders, was a member of this House. A newcomer, who was destined to have a national career and enduring fame, was William Pitt Fessenden, then a young Whig, of Portland. Over the Senate presided Stephen C. Foster, who, with two of his colleagues, Isaac Reed, of Waldoboro, and David Hammons, of Oxford County, was to sit in Congress with the Speaker of the House. Samuel H. Blake, of Bangor, was a future attorney-general of the State. Levi Bradley, of the same city, was a leading lumberman of the State. Franklin Smith, of Anson, was a prominent landowner. A coming governor and rival of Mr. Hamlin's for senatorial honors was John W. Dana, who was then beginning his legislative career in the House. Another future associate in the House, at Washington, was Elbridge Gerry, of Waterford, who was clerk of this House.

During this session of the legislature an effort was renewed in the United States Senate to repeal the fisheries bounty of \$250,000. This was a movement that was aimed directly at one of Maine's chief interests. Mr. Hamlin gave his earnest attention to the subject. With other leading members of the legislature, Mr. Hamlin met this movement with a prompt remonstrance. This was accomplished by the appointment of a select committee chosen from both Houses at Mr. Hamlin's suggestion. He interested himself in the committee's work, and its report was his argument in favor of retaining the bounty. Briefly, Mr. Hamlin demonstrated that the fisheries bounty act should be maintained because the fisheries produced brave sailors for the navy in the wars of 1776 and 1812, and because the act also fostered the shipbuilding business. Hence, the fisheries bounty was national, not entirely sectional in its workings, and hence the considerations of national interests and safety demanded its maintenance. This was still another subject with which Mr. Hamlin became prominently identified in his national career.



Another question of national and state interest that obtained Mr. Hamlin's active support in this legislature, and throughout his whole term of public service, was the settlement of the French spoliation claims. By the treaty of 1831, France agreed to pay the United States the sum of \$5,000,000 for despoiling our navy in the last Napoleonic war. The payment was delayed for several years, and when the money was received it was used for government purposes. John Quincy Adams ascertained the fact of the government's delinquency, and called it severely to account. Senator Ether Shepley, afterwards chief justice of Maine, declared in the United States Senate, speaking of the claims: "Our government pocketed the consideration and repudiated the debt." Maine had suffered severely from the depredation France and England had made on her ships, and even four years after Senator Shepley had urged the government to satisfy these just claims, the restitution had not been made. On March 13, 1840, Mr. Hamlin procured the passage of a resolution through the legislature admonishing the government that it was "bound upon every principle of equity to make provision for an indemnity to those who suffered by French spoliation upon American commerce prior to September, 1840; that, having compromised all claims upon the French government for such spoliation, and received an ample indemnity therefor, a longer delay on the part of the general government in making provision for those individuals whose property has been appropriated for the common benefit would be neither expedient nor just." The sequel to this was the hard and conscientious work Mr. Hamlin accomplished at Washington on many private claims which the government had ignored.

This was, on the whole, a good working legislature, but unfortunately its reputation suffered from a senseless joke some one played on it in the winter. The incident was the most trying Mr. Hamlin experienced while speaker. There was great rejoicing among Governor Fairfield's friends over his large plurality. One of his admirers was Mrs. Longley, the wife of an extensive farmer of Greene. Remembering how an admirer of President Jackson had presented him with a mammoth cheese, she bestowed on Governor Fairfield a similar token of her esteem. It weighed fully four hundred pounds, and Governor Fairfield presented a large portion of it to the legislature for luncheon on a certain day. The Whig members of the legislature contributed cider and brown bread to the feast. A recess of half an hour was taken, and the legislature adjourned to the room where the cheese, cider, and brown bread had been set forth. The cider was in a large keg. Some of the representatives drank freely, and it was noticed that they became voluble and animated. When the Speaker called the House to order, these members, at least twenty

in number, jumped to their feet and demanded recognition. He recognized a member, and a yell of protest from the others arose. The Speaker saw that something had gone wrong, and received a motion to adjourn the House. But the motion was voted down in a storm of "Noes!" A second met with a similar fate, and when a third motion was introduced, the excited members rushed to the Speaker's desk, shouting and waving their arms. Bedlam reigned. Speaker Hamlin grasped the situation, and amidst frantic demonstrations and efforts to secure his recognition, declared the House adjourned. When they found themselves standing on the floor before an empty speaker's chair, the sudden change of situation brought the noisy representatives to a realizing sense of their conduct. One by one the representatives slunk out of the House into the luncheon room. The cider keg was still there. Some one, who had not drunk any of its contents, made a quiet investigation. Lo! brandy, in large quantities, had been mixed with the cider. The affair created a great scandal, but it was never found out who had perpetrated the trick, although some ardent Democrats called it a Whig joke. It is hardly necessary to add that Speaker Hamlin's ruling was eventually upheld.

This session closed Mr. Hamlin's terms of consecutive service in the legislature. He often referred to this period as the happiest in his public career. Undoubtedly, the experience he thus gained gave him the key to his success in national fields.

## CHAPTER VII

### ELECTED TO CONGRESS

THE presidential election of 1840 was preceded by the most picturesque campaign in the history of the country. The Democrats renominated President Van Buren, and the Whigs presented General William Henry Harrison as their candidate. In the summer of this year Mr. Hamlin entered national politics, and sought his party's nomination for Congress, in what was called the Penobscot district. He was supported by the same elements that elected him to the legislature and the speakership of the House; and he was opposed by the party leaders of Bangor, because they thought him too young, and also because they had a candidate of their own, A. G. Jewett, an able lawyer and a leading politician of Bangor. The convention was held at Levant, on the fourth of July. Mr. Hamlin received ninety-six votes, and Mr. Jewett seventy-six. This was a great surprise to Mr. Hamlin's opponents. Two of the Bangor leaders were John S. Chadwick and Jefferson Chamberlain, sheriff and register of deeds of Penobscot County. When the result of the ballot was announced, Chadwick and Chamberlain held a short consultation. Then approaching the successful nominee, one of them said: "Mr. Hamlin, we did not know you, but we do now. Hereafter we propose to train in your company." The nomination was made unanimous, and the convention bestowed an additional compliment on Mr. Hamlin by electing him a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, which was held at Baltimore. After Mr. Van Buren's renomination, which Mr. Hamlin favored, he returned to Maine and took part in the closest election ever held in the State during his lifetime.

For a year or more there had been signs of a political revolution. Times were hard; the people were in a state of unrest. A low tariff had done its work. Mr. Van Buren had given the country a good administration, but he was doomed to go down before a whirlwind of popular wrath that followed the panic of 1837. He became the target for abuse such as few presidential candidates have had heaped on them. He was represented as an unscrupulous schemer and a thoroughly insincere man. This was unjust to Mr. Van Buren. He was the first perfectly polished machine politician to reach the presi-



dency, and was more of a politician than a statesman; but he had statesmanlike qualities, and having been governor of New York, United States senator, secretary of state, vice-president, and president, he was better equipped by experience for his high position than General Harrison was. If Mr. Van Buren was too suave in address and manner to be thought sincere, he nevertheless could rise above popular clamor and partisanship. He stood firm for the adoption of his sub-treasury plan, although his position on this question was one of the causes of his unpopularity. Although a pro-slavery man, Mr. Van Buren believed in maintaining the status of affairs as established by the Constitution. Hence, he was not a willing instrument of the slave power. His opposition to the annexation of Texas proved that. But the people demanded a change. The Whigs were quick to see their opportunity. An incautious sneer at General Harrison's early life in a log-cabin gave them their cue. They started a movement to elect Harrison, the like of which has never been seen since in the United States. The log-cabin was the Whig emblem. Thousands were erected throughout the country, and miniature representations were carried in processions. The Whig meetings were without precedent in size, enthusiasm, numbers, attendance, and procedure. Tom Corwin, the brilliant Whig orator, addressed audiences in Ohio, some of which fully numbered 20,000 people. Hard cider was liberally dispensed. People came miles on horseback, or even on foot. Huge balls, with campaign mottoes painted on them, were rolled at the head of processions. Some balls were started even in Maine, and rolled through other States. Campaign songs, another new feature, swept over the country, glorifying "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too."

In Maine the two parties contested every inch of the ground.<sup>1</sup> The Democrats renominated Governor Fairfield, and the Whigs Mr. Kent. By an interesting coincidence, Mr. Hamlin's opponent was his competitor for legislative honors and his personal friend, — Elisha H. Allen. Governor Fairfield had proved himself to be a strong man. He would have achieved a conspicuous national career had not death suddenly cut him down a few years after he had entered the United States Senate. Mr. Kent had the prestige of having once defeated a Democrat for governor. Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Allen "stumped" their district together, discussing in debate the political questions of the day. This was an innovation in the political customs of Maine, and the two candidates spoke to large audiences from the same platform nearly every night for the greater part of two months. Often Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Allen had to room together, for the hotel ac-

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Story, the sculptor-artist, who was then a law student in Boston, and an ardent Jackson Democrat, stumped Mr. Hamlin's district for him, having made his acquaintance on his professional visits to Boston.

commodations in the country districts were primitive. The times were rather boisterous, and the two candidates had some trying experiences, but they remained good friends, and in subsequent years had many a laugh over their experiences in this campaign. One incident caused some merriment at Mr. Allen's expense. He had been in the habit of opening the debate. The last night of the campaign the candidates were to speak in the old city hall, in Bangor. Mr. Hamlin said: "Allen, you have had the advantage of speaking first. Now let me fire the first gun to-night." Mr. Allen assented. He had been in the habit of beginning the debate with a set speech, in which he told some capital stories, to illustrate his position. To Mr. Allen's utter amazement, he heard Hamlin reel off his stories with original applications that brought out peals of laughter. His discomfiture was complete when Hamlin closed and whispered to him in the suavest manner imaginable: "Allen, old fellow, your stories are so good that I thought they ought to be told twice."

But Mr. Allen had the last laugh. In the election he had 200 votes more than his opponent, in a total poll of 15,000. Mr. Hamlin had the satisfaction of running ahead of his party's ticket, which was beaten in the State. Out of 91,000 votes, Mr. Kent defeated Governor Fairfield by a bare plurality of sixty-seven. As Maine was a pillar of the Democratic party, Kent's election electrified the Whigs, and in wild enthusiasm they expressed their joy in the following famous doggerel verse:—

"Have you heard the glorious news from Maine?  
Maine, she's gone hell-bent for Governor Kent,  
And Tippecanoe and Tyler, too."

In the opinion of their opponents, the Whigs in Maine exulted a little too much over their victory. They had a log-cabin and a big gun at Hallowell. Whenever they received favorable news they set the gun booming. When the great news came in October that Ohio had fallen in line, the Whigs of Hallowell paraded their gun all over town; but when they returned to fire salutes, lo! their powder had disappeared. Some Democrats had pitched it into the Kennebec. Thus the cider trick was offset, and the laugh was turned on the Whigs. But in the following month pandemonium reigned wherever there were Whigs. They had carried the country by an immense majority, and elected Harrison and Tyler President and Vice-President.

For the next three years, Mr. Hamlin remained at home, practicing his profession, though he maintained a prominent part in his party's affairs. The Whigs' jubilation was turned into grief, by the death of President Harrison within a month after his inauguration, and their sorrow into bitterness over their betrayal by Mr. Tyler. Out of their

great victory in 1840 the Whigs reaped only disappointment. Tyler vetoed a bill to restore the United States Bank, and was hostile to Whig tariff ideas and other legislation proposed. An immediate result of Tyler's recreancy was the recuperation of the Democratic party in Maine, in 1841. Mr. Fairfield this time defeated Governor Kent by 10,000 plurality, and the next year was reelected for a fourth term by more than 14,000 plurality. To accommodate the new apportionment under the census, the congressional election was postponed from 1842 to 1843. Mr. Hamlin was renominated for Congress in the Penobscot district, and this time was elected by a majority of 1,000 votes over Mr. Allen.

Traveling facilities were decidedly limited when Mr. Hamlin made his first journey from Hampden to Washington. He had to pass over a circuitous route, in a number of different conveyances. From Hampden to Portland, he proceeded in a stage-coach, and thence by boat to Boston. From that city he traveled by railroad to Norwich, whence he crossed the Sound to Greenport. There he took the Long Island railroad to New York, and thence to Philadelphia. He made his way to Baltimore by boat and stage, finishing his journey by rail. Washington was not an inspiring spectacle to one who had made this long journey. It was a small, straggling, overgrown, and ill-kept city of twenty thousand inhabitants. The streets were full of grass and dirt. Cows were even pastured in some of the principal streets. The houses were cheerless-looking. Pennsylvania Avenue was paved with dust or mud, according to the weather that prevailed. On a windy day immense clouds of dust swept over the street, sometimes making it hard for pedestrians to see their way. On a rainy day the avenue was a bank of thick, black mud. One of the few picturesque sights was the old Capitol. The Washington of that period was a disgrace. Few congressmen brought their families to live with them, and it was the custom for them to club together, hire a house, and contract with the landlord or a caterer to provide the table. These clubs were called "messes," and they were more important and exclusive than the name would seem to imply. Many famous measures were planned at "messes," and their champions appointed. It was the invariable rule that no member of a "mess" should invite an outsider to dinner without having obtained the permission of his associates. Strange to say refusal rarely gave offense.

Congress was a more demonstrative and talkative body than the one which now assembles at Washington. Many members wore the old-fashioned swallow-tailed coat, and others the buff waistcoat. Mr. Hamlin adopted the former garment, and wore it all the rest of his life. Although there was not that brilliant social atmosphere of to-day, yet in their polite intercourse the members of Congress were very



ceremonious. The speeches were ornate, full of high-sounding periods, and, as a rule, very long. It was the closing period of a picturesque era — one full of extravagant talk and demonstration that preluded an approach of a time of violent action. There were still orators in Congress who regularly announced in their speeches their willingness to shed their blood on their country's altar, simply to gratify a weak fondness for playing on their own emotions. Personal habits were not as good as now. There was much drinking and card-playing. Public altercations were not infrequent. Personal allusions in debate were frequent. Dueling was still practiced. Party feeling, too, was intense, and party discipline was rigid. There could not be much intercourse between the people of the various parts of the country, on account of the scant and expensive facilities of travel. Hence, provincialism and partisanship of a narrow kind were to a considerable extent the outcome of the order of things.

When Mr. Hamlin took his seat in Congress, slavery was looming up as a political issue, and events were soon set in motion that formed a momentous epoch in the history of the Republic. It was not generally perceived at this time that the North and the South were each fostering a civilization of its own, and that the two people each looked at the Union from a totally different point of view. The North had developed its civilization through free institutions, and was a democracy; the South had developed its civilization through slavery, and was controlled by a slaveholding aristocracy. Through the encouragement of free labor the North had been able to master its own resources, and had become a community that was self-supporting and the embodiment of progress. Through its blind attachment to slave labor, the South had narrowed down into an agricultural, free-trade section, whose productive capacity was practically limited to that of the slave, and was dependent on the world for the staples of life in exchange for its cotton, tobacco, rice, and indigo. The two sections had been bound together by the possession of a common glorious heritage, and their desire to remain in union with each other had been cemented by various acts of legislation, such as the recognition of slavery by the Constitution and the Missouri Compromise. But slavery had proved to be the evil genius of the South; it had blinded a generous and chivalrous people to its moral evils and its blighting effect. It had become so thoroughly the basis of Southern business, social, and political life, that it could be thrown out of the body politic only by a gigantic convulsion. But this was not realized until years later.

Mr. Hamlin entered Congress when the slave power, not content with controlling the entire South, was beginning to extend the institution in the hope that it might control the entire country. But this

was developed year by year, and the part he played in frustrating this conspiracy is the rôle of his life. It is interesting to observe his point of view at this juncture. One of the anti-slavery men in this Congress, with whom he was associated, was Henry Williams, of Taunton, Mass. Mr. Hamlin told Mr. Williams that, before leaving his home, he had made up his mind that he would not interfere with slavery in the Southern States, and would give the South all its constitutional rights; but if the Democratic party went farther than this and made the extension of slavery over free territory its policy, he would abandon the party. In other words, this was the position taken by Northern men, such as Lincoln and Hamlin, at this stage. They regarded slavery as an evil entailed on the United States by the mother country, and they also believed that the Constitution could not have been formed and the Union established without the recognition of the peculiar institution. But they also held that the Constitution was to be fairly interpreted when it gave the States that right to regulate their own affairs. The Northern States had expelled slavery, while the South had retained it. Under the Constitution, neither had a right to interfere with the other in the matter of local affairs, and slavery was a local institution, and could be regulated by the individual States precisely as the lottery was.

But John C. Calhoun and his school of statesmen, who saw the North outstripping the South, hoped to maintain the political prestige of the South by making slavery national. These protagonists of the drama of 1860 are now to be regarded as products of slavery,—as examples of its warping and narrowing influence. They were sincere and personally pure men, and in censuring them for their acts, their birth, circumstances, and environments are to be considered. They are to be judged as singularly blind to the debasing effects of slavery, and as reckless in deluding their people into a course that they might not have followed if they could have clearly understood the progress the North made under free institutions. Yet, in the case of Calhoun, it is to be remembered that he was not in advance of his environments. The idea that the government was a compact, and that each State could withdraw when it desired, was evolved to give slavery protection, a last refuge to insure its existence. This was the natural fruit of the institution itself. But Calhoun cannot escape the responsibility of doing more than any other man of his day to implant the doctrine of state sovereignty in the minds of his generation as the shibboleth of the South, and to initiate the gigantic conspiracy to fasten slavery on Northern soil. When Mr. Hamlin now entered public life this baneful doctrine had thoroughly impregnated the Southern mind. The Southern statesmen of this era were probably abler dialecticians and orators than their Northern colleagues; but in reasoning from

false premises they reached false conclusions. Hence, believing in slavery and thinking that they still lived under the old confederacy, they held the Abolitionists, protective tariffs, and fishery bounties to be the cause of friction between the two sections. The North was also guilty of temporizing with its conscience, and made compromises in the delusive hope of maintaining peace. This, then, was the situation when Mr. Hamlin became a member of the House, and a glance at the personnel of this Congress is interesting.

While the Twenty-eighth Congress did not rank intellectually with its immediate predecessors and successors, it was one of the most important and interesting assemblages that ever legislated on issues affecting the vital welfare of this nation. Webster, Clay, and Calhoun were missed in the Senate, and the House was filled with young men who had yet to make themselves felt in public affairs; still, there were strong men in either branch, and future leaders were to play leading rôles in the greatest drama of the American people. Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri, was the Roman of the Senate. He was a massive defender of the Constitution, and the Democracy's ablest expounder of the pure Jeffersonian doctrine of government. He was honest and a born leader. Hence, he was often a rock in the way of the slave power. In contrast to Benton was his colleague, David R. Atchison, who was high in the inner councils of the slave hierarchy, as was proved by his leadership in the nefarious effort to force slavery into Kansas. He is also remembered as the "one-day President," for he claimed to have acted as President the Sunday on which General Taylor refused to take the oath of office. Personally, Mr. Atchison was well liked. The divided state of sentiment at the North was represented in Levi Woodbury and Charles G. Atherton, the one a strong type of the Jackson school, the other a Northern man of Southern principles, who figures in history in connection with the so-called "Atherton gag," an infamous rule of Congress which forbade the introduction of any petition relating to slavery. Another commanding figure of the Jackson school was the able and upright Silas Wright, of New York. One of Pennsylvania's senators was the unfortunate Buchanan. Prominent among the Whigs was Rufus Choate, the greatest of all American advocates, a wizard of oratory, a patriotic but unsuccessful statesman. Willie P. Mangum, of North Carolina, and John M. Berrien, of Georgia, were among the ablest statesmen of the Whig party, and worthy representatives of the national idea of government formulated by the South's greatest men, which was now being undermined by the insidious state-rights doctrine of Calhoun. George McDuffie was the typical South Carolina state-rights man. Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, was another Northern man of Southern ideas, for he was Mr. Calhoun's most



active agent in popularizing the Texas scheme among the Northern States, though in all justice to Mr. Walker it must be added that he was sincere, and in 1861, after hostilities had begun, won the respect of Mr. Lincoln's administration for his valuable services to the government in upholding our credit in Europe. William R. King, who was Vice-President under Mr. Pierce, was the other senator from Alabama, an amiable man, — a gentleman of the old school of deportment. From Ohio came William Allen, a plain, blunt-spoken man of the people. William C. Rives, of Virginia, may be regarded as one of many Southern men who honestly regretted the secession movement, and yet allowed their course to be shaped by their respective States. R. H. Bayard represented the powerful Bayard following of Delaware. William L. Dayton, who was the first candidate of the Republican party for Vice-President, and Benjamin Tappan, of Ohio, were among the scant number of anti-slavery leaders this Senate was to produce.

John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States, was the most commanding figure of the House of Representatives. He was now in his final battles for the rights of free speech and petition. Fortunate it was for the republic that he was not reelected to the presidency, for he sought a vindication by entering the House. There he achieved that career which is one of the inspiring pages in the annals of the nation. In this Congress he was blazing the way for the coming of the Republican party, and some of its future pioneers were already assembling by his side. The most active representative of the Calhoun doctrine in the House was Henry A. Wise, of Virginia. The most conspicuous opponent of slavery on the floor was the towering Abolitionist of Ohio, Joshua R. Giddings. George C. Dromgoole, of Virginia, a clever parliamentarian, was the leader of the Southern Democrats. Samuel F. Vinton, of Ohio, a man of pronounced ability and high character, was prominent among the Whig members. Another leading Whig was Robert C. Winthrop, of Massachusetts, a man of fine scholarship, who afterwards became speaker of the House, though he did not retain his prominence, owing to his conservative tendencies on the slavery issue. Still another coming speaker was Linn Boyd, of Kentucky. R. Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, Howell Cobb and Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi, John Slidell, of Louisiana, Thomas L. Clingman, of North Carolina, with Wise, of Virginia, formed a group of imperishable memory, both in the inception of the plot to break up the Union and its attempted execution. In contrast was a group of anti-slavery Democrats and Whigs. Chief among them was John P. Hale, one of the few avowed Abolitionists of that period, — a man whose witty and caustic tongue the slavery men feared, while they

could not help liking the frankness, honesty, and geniality of the man. Robert Dale Owen, of Indiana, was another vigorous and fearlessly outspoken advocate of abolition. A distinguished member of the New York delegation was Preston King, short and stocky in body, weighty in argument, and, to use Mr. Hamlin's estimate of King, "as true as steel to his convictions." George Rathbun, of New York, Robert C. Schenck and Jacob Brinkerhoff, of Ohio, Solomon Foot and Jacob Collamer, of Vermont, and Daniel Putnam King, of Massachusetts, were also members of this group with which Mr. Hamlin acted on questions relating to slavery. There were also among Mr. Hamlin's colleagues several men who were to attain greater distinction. Andrew Johnson was a coming President. Stephen A. Douglas was already a rising leader of his party, and ambitious for its greatest honors. Hamilton Fish was destined to leave an enviable record as secretary of state in President Grant's Cabinet. Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, was to be Mr. Lincoln's secretary of the interior. Washington Hunt was a future governor of New York. Alexander Ramsay, then of Pennsylvania, was to represent Minnesota in the Senate, and to be secretary of war in Mr. Hayes's Cabinet. Cave Johnson, of Tennessee, was to leave this House to become postmaster-general under Mr. Polk's administration. In marked contrast to each other were Kenneth Raynor, of North Carolina, who was a loyal Union man during the civil war, and Thomas H. Seymour, of Connecticut, who was a leader of the so-called copperhead element.

The House was not wanting in quaint personal characteristics. It had probably the largest man and the smallest man that ever were members of the House. The first was Dixon H. Lewis, of Alabama, who was a mountain of flesh, and had to have a chair made for him. But he was a giant in intellect as well. The other was Alexander H. Stephens, who was so small and frail in appearance that he seemed a youth in the last stages of consumption. But he, too, belied his appearance. An exceedingly eccentric character, the court jester of the House, was Felix Grundy McConnell, of Alabama. He was a man of brilliant mental qualities, but his habits were responsible for his grotesque performances. At a fashionable concert given by Ole Bull, the Norwegian violinist, who was then the reigning musical favorite, McConnell interrupted the violinist in the midst of a delicate passage by shouting out: "None of your highfalutin' fiddling; give us 'Hail Columbia,' and bear hard on the treble." A sensation followed. The audience called for the police, and the officers had to use their clubs to eject the unruly congressman from the hall.

The new members of Congress rapidly formed their associations. In the words of another writer: "Naturally enough, in what was then the small and contracted political and social circle of Washington, a



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man of Mr. Hamlin's striking appearance and many attainments was not long in making his mark. Tall and graceful in figure, with black and piercing eyes, a skin almost olive-colored, hair smooth, thick, and jetty, a manner always courteous and affable, the new member soon found his way into the best society of the capital. His advancement to a commanding position in the political world was quite as rapid."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin was soon associated with Preston King, Jacob Brinkerhoff, George Rathbun, and other members of his party who eventually constituted a notable group of anti-slavery Democrats in the House. In their councils they both formulated practical and important measures and appointed their champions. Mr. Hamlin made many pleasant acquaintances outside of his political circle. A Unitarian church had been founded at Washington, and as the new faith it upheld was not popular, it had to struggle for its existence. Mr. Hamlin naturally inclined towards an independent religious belief. Among the small congregation were a few congressmen. One was Daniel Putnam King, a man of high character and fine fibre, a graduate of Harvard. Mr. Hamlin and Mr. King worked together to build up this little church. They became greatly interested in the church through its pastor, Edward Everett Hale, who had come from Boston to begin his ministerial duties at Washington. Mr. Hale was already manifesting those noble qualities of character and mind that have made him one of the most widely beloved citizens of his country and the foremost Unitarian of the land in his day. A strong personal affection grew up between the young congressman and his pastor, which developed into a firm and lasting friendship. In a personal letter to the author under the date of February 27, 1896, Dr. Hale wrote: "I supplied the pulpit at Washington for one winter. My memory of him (Mr. Hamlin) is as one of the pillars on whom the little church relied with absolute confidence. The support of members of Congress meant more than it does now to such a church. The whole attendance at the Unitarian church, of all the worshipers, seldom amounted to two hundred persons, and we knew very well that the presence among them of eleven or twelve congressmen was a matter of great importance in the prestige of the church. Of these eleven or twelve Mr. Hamlin and Mr. King were two—absolutely reliable. There were, alas! gentlemen who were sound Unitarians in New England, who were never in our little church. But we were sure of the two I have named. I am not speaking simply of the winter when I lived in Washington, but of many years after, when I maintained my interest in the church and its affairs. As you know, I renewed my personal acquaintance with your father in Spain, where I owed much to his constant kindness and to that of Mrs. Hamlin.

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*.

I trust that you will understand how high was the esteem in which they were held there, and how important he made his place by the cordiality of his intercourse with all travelers and with the diplomatic circle. I was disappointed when I found no memoranda from his own pen which would show his interest in the affairs of our Washington church. But you know how active he could be without saying anything of what he was doing."



## CHAPTER VIII

### WORK OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

WHEN the House was being organized a parliamentary snarl ensued that is of both personal and political interest. The preceding Congress had enacted a law directing the States, that elected representatives to Congress on a general ticket, to follow the more popular method of electing by districts. This was regarded as a Whig law, and several Democratic States, in the election of 1843, flatly disregarded the act on the ground that it was unconstitutional, because it interfered with the rights of the States. The Whig members of this House were determined to enforce the law if possible, and accordingly drew up a protest against the seating of Democratic representatives from New Hampshire, Georgia, Mississippi, and Missouri, which were the States in question, in order to prevent these representatives from voting in the election of a speaker. When the clerk called the House to order, that it might proceed to effect a permanent organization, John Campbell, a Democrat, of South Carolina, questioned the right of the members of New Hampshire to take their seats until the House had inquired into the mode of their election, and he submitted a resolution to take proceedings accordingly. But the clerk, believing that he was clothed only with authority to act in the capacity of an initiatory officer, refused to accept Mr. Campbell's resolution. The House was in a predicament, and David D. Barnard, a tenacious Whig, of New York, tried to read the Whigs' protest. In the unorganized condition of the House, the majority members refused to hear him, and proceeded to elect John W. Jones, a Democrat, of Virginia, speaker by a vote of 128 to 59 for John White, of Kentucky, the Whig candidate.

The members whose seats were disputed took part in the election of speaker, but this did not close the affair. The next day the Whigs were greatly exercised to find that the clerk had not incorporated their protest in the journal of the House, in spite of the fact that it had not been read. A violent wrangle followed, lasting two days. The Whigs tried to have the journal amended so as to have their protest appear in the records of the first day. The issue was on the duties of the clerk, and yet the debate, after eddying around this point, drifted off on to the constitutional rights of the minority and majority

members of the House, and discussions of abstract principles that were supposed to be involved. The Whigs did succeed in having their protest entered in the journal on the second day in the form of a resolution, but this did not satisfy them. The House became confused on the question as to what constituted a House. Finally, on the third day, Mr. Hamlin offered a resolution directing the clerk not to print the protest. Robert C. Winthrop vehemently protested, and asked if there was a single precedent in the whole history of Congress directing the clerk as to the discharge of his duties. As he understood, the clerk was sworn by a solemn oath to God to discharge his duties to the House, and was responsible for the journal.

Mr. Hamlin quietly pointed out the forgotten fact that the protest had not yet been read in the House, and that there was no legislative evidence that the document at issue was the same one which was offered on the opening day of the session, although members would be willing to take Mr. Barnard's personal word for it.<sup>1</sup> This put a new aspect on the debate, and in the end the House upheld Mr. Hamlin's position by striking the protest in the form of a resolution out of the record.

Mr. Hamlin was appointed a member of the Committee on Elections,<sup>2</sup> and was thus immediately thrown in contact with the extreme Southern members of the House. Among his associates on the Committee on Elections were Stephen A. Douglas, Robert C. Schenck, and Garrett Davis. Speaker Jones's seat was contested by John Minor Botts, who won distinction by his loyalty to the Union, when Virginia was the seat of war. The contest between Mr. Jones and Mr. Botts was admittedly close, and the session of the Committee on Elections aroused great excitement in Congress and interest throughout the country. Garrett Davis, the leading Whig member of the committee, was of that peculiar hot-headed, argumentative type of Southern politicians who seem to rely on the act of speech to enable them to come to a decision, and as Davis rarely knew his own mind, Mr. Hamlin's patience was more than once exhausted over Davis's waste of time. Finally, Davis and some of his sympathizers thought they could intimidate Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Douglas. The result was not satisfactory to Davis, and some fire-eaters indulged in wild threats about shooting Douglas and that "black Penobscot Indian," as Davis stigmatized Mr. Hamlin. The details of this affair were not then fully revealed, but the fact is apparent that Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Douglas believed that they had good reason to remember the old proverb that "to be forewarned is to be forearmed." As dueling was still in vogue, Southern fire-eaters carried pistols, and

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, December 11, 1843, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, December 14, 1843, p. 36.

drunken brawls among quick-tempered congressmen were not infrequent. For the first and only time in his life, Mr. Hamlin armed himself. Mr. Douglas also put a pistol in his pocket, and a signal was agreed upon in case Davis or his friends should attempt to shoot Mr. Hamlin or Mr. Douglas.

At the next session of the committee, Davis once more endeavored to intimidate Mr. Hamlin, thinking that his threats might have had an effect. But he met with an emphatic resistance that completely threw him off his balance.

"You shan't speak so, sir; you shan't!" Davis fairly screamed in his rage.

"Well, no matter how I may speak, I will think as I please," replied Mr. Hamlin.

"No, sir; no, sir; dam'me if you will. I'll be damned if you will think as you please. You have no right to think at all, sir," Davis howled.

The shout of laughter that came from Mr. Hamlin and the other committeemen covered Davis with mortification at his absurd blunder; but when he cooled off the session ended without further efforts to override Mr. Hamlin.

General Schenck, who was an amused spectator of Davis's performance, subsequently encountered the same fiery element in a dramatic scene on the floor, in which Davis also figured, strange to say, as a friend of the sturdy Ohioan. Joshua R. Giddings had been accused by Southern slaveholders of stealing slaves and secretly sending them out of the District of Columbia, and he had been violently abused on the floor of the House in connection with this charge. Mr. Giddings determined to make a personal explanation, but when he rose to speak there came cries from all over the House: "Don't hear him. Don't hear him. We object. We object." Great confusion prevailed, but finally General Schenck got the floor and insisted that, in the interests of justice, Mr. Giddings should be heard. He closed his argument by saying: "I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that under the circumstances, no gentleman would object," with emphasis on the word "gentleman." Mr. Giddings was then allowed to have the floor. But this was not the end of the matter. Jacob Thompson told Mr. Schenck that the impression was that he had reference to Slidell, of Louisiana, when he insisted that "no gentleman would object." Schenck denied that he had Slidell in mind when making this statement, but Thompson, who was curious to know who the man was whom Schenck indirectly reproved, managed to badger him into making a public disavowal the next day that Slidell was the one. But Slidell was not satisfied with this, and proceeded to ask Schenck so many annoying questions that Mr. Schenck lost his patience. In



spite of the efforts of his friend, Governor Vance, of Ohio, to restrain him, Mr. Schenck took the floor and said : —

“It is evident that what the member from Louisiana desires to know is to whom I referred yesterday, when I said that no gentleman would object to the explanation of my colleague. Lest there should be any further doubt upon this subject, I will say here and now that I meant and referred to the drunken member from Alabama, Felix G. McConnell.”

A wild uproar immediately arose. McConnell rushed down the aisle to Schenck's seat, shaking his fist, and threatening dire revenge on the blunt member from Ohio. But an encounter was averted, and order finally restored. After the House had adjourned, Garrett Davis approached General Schenck, and asked him if he carried a pistol. Learning that he did not, Davis said : —

“You had better carry one to-day ; McConnell is swearing that he will shoot you on sight.”

“Still, I have n't one,” replied Schenck, “and I don't know where to get one.”

“Take mine — take mine,” said Davis, pushing his weapon into Schenck's hand.

For three days General Schenck kept Davis's pistol, but when he met McConnell face to face, the fiery Alabamian made no demonstration, and Mr. Davis received his pistol unused.<sup>1</sup>

Another incident that characterized the temper of the House was a personal encounter between George Rathbun and John White.<sup>2</sup> Rathbun was a high-spirited Democrat and one of the Northern representatives who heartily despised the so-called “dough-faces” and “fire-eaters.” White was a talented man, but of a passionate disposition, and had an unruly tongue. As speaker of the preceding House he had offended many Democrats by his alleged partisan conduct. In the latter part of this session, when the House had one day resolved itself into the committee of the whole, some discussion arose as to the language that Henry Clay used in regard to the Missouri Compromise, which is immaterial. White contradicted a member who alluded to Mr. Clay's alleged words, and Mr. Rathbun spoke up, and said that the truth of Clay's statement was known throughout the House. White leaned over towards Rathbun, and in a low tone of voice cursed him, and applied an opprobrious epithet. According to Mr. Rathbun, White at the same time raised his hand to strike. Rathbun was too quick, and dealt White a blow. Bystanders, however, grasped the two men, and the general struggle threw the House into an uproar. At this moment an outsider named William S. Moor,

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*.

<sup>2</sup> *Congressional Globe*, April 23, 1844, p. 578.

who evidently wanted to take a hand in the fray, rushed into the House, and installed himself behind the railing in front of the Speaker's desk. The sergeant-at-arms ejected Moor, but in Moor's efforts to escape he drew a pistol and shot an officer in the leg. This brought the House to its senses. Messrs. Rathbun and White apologized and shook hands. Nevertheless an investigation was ordered, and when the report was made, Mr. White took exceptions because, forsooth, the report neglected to state that he had sworn at Mr. Rathbun in a low tone of voice. John P. Hale saw the Pickwickian trend of the affair, and with some sarcasm observed that if Mr. White did whisper his insult to Mr. Rathbun, it magnified the offense, because White must have been calm and cool at that moment. The usual motion to expel was made with the usual result,—the report was tabled. White left Congress at the end of the term, and the next year died by his own hand.

A true index of the attitude of public men of the day towards slavery is to be found in the records of this House on the question of retaining or abolishing the twenty-first rule, which is better known as the "infamous gag-law." From the beginning of the government, Congress had received petitions in opposition to slavery, and in 1836 the slave power passed a rule in Congress to table without discussion any petition relating to slavery. The immediate result was that anti-slavery sentiment at the North was increased, and feeling between the two sections of the country became more embittered. It was even charged by John Minor Botts that the slave power conceived the gag-law with this very object in view, in order to help bring about a separation. But whether this claim was correct or not, the adoption of the obnoxious measure had that effect. The debates that the gag-law gave rise to in Congress were widely circulated throughout the country, and the Southern leaders of the slave party eventually systematically deceived the Southern people as to the sentiments, intentions, and character of the Northern people. But in the end the gag-law became a mighty engine in the hands of John Quincy Adams for the destruction of its own creator. As a natural champion of free speech and the right of petition, this measure aroused his sense of justice and his pugnacious nature. Certainly no more despotic rule was ever passed by a body of men calling themselves the representatives of a self-governing people than this gag-law. Under its provisions a complaisant speaker would refuse to allow a petition to be presented that seemed to him to reflect on slavery, no matter what its language might be. The House of Representatives then did have a "czar."

Mr. Adams had been waging unrelenting warfare on the twenty-first rule since its adoption, and now victory seemed nearly within his

grasp. It was in the preceding House that the effort was made to censure him. In this House Mr. Adams knew there were new members on whom he could count, and he was desirous of getting them into action against the tyrannical rule. Mr. Adams was now seventy-seven years of age, and yet his mind was as clear, his will as inflexible, and his heart as stout as ever. He was both hated and feared by the slave representatives, and still they were forced to acknowledge his superior ability even to their cost. The old Puritan undoubtedly enjoyed a savage delight in fighting the slave party in the House single-handed. One day, when Adams was laying round him with terrific effect, and opponent after opponent had gone down under his deadly fire of facts and withering sarcasm, a despairing Southern member turned to Mr. Hamlin, and said: "It is useless to debate with Adams. He knows so much that, one way or another, and despite the devil, he can, when he will, make the greatest wrong appear the greatest right." The respect in which Mr. Adams's ability was held was shown in the fact that although Speaker Jones knew that the veteran intended to reopen his batteries on the twenty-first rule, he nevertheless appointed Mr. Adams chairman of the Committee on Rules, the very body that would first act upon the question of retaining or abolishing his *bête noire* — the gag-law.

A few weeks after the House had been organized, the committee was ready to make its report, when a story was circulated that Mr. Adams had induced the latter to omit the twenty-first rule. Members poured out of the cloak rooms on to the floor, and great excitement prevailed. Mr. Dromgoole, the skillful Democratic leader and a member of the Committee on Rules, practically confirmed the story by saying that his colleagues had made material changes in the rules, and that he would like to have the report recommitted, because their important sessions had not been fully attended. By admitting in the next breath that he had absented himself from the meetings of the committee, Mr. Dromgoole unwittingly revealed the fact that there had been perfect confidence that the old rules would not be changed, and that he and the other slavery representatives had been beaten through inattention to their duties.

But the incautious E. J. Black, of Georgia, at once put the anti-slavery men on their guard by boldly charging that the committee had dropped the twenty-first rule, and he announced with vehemence his intention of defying any committee, or House, that would allow his constituents to be assailed by "incendiaries and Abolitionists" by abolishing the twenty-first rule. "Talk to me," he exclaimed, "about Whigs and Democrats when abolition is the question before the House!" Motion after motion followed Black's outbreak in rapid succession, and another parliamentary snarl threatened to ensue. Mr.



Hamlin made up his mind that it would be best to declare his convictions on the gag-law, and try to bring matters to a crisis. He took the floor, and in a few words pointed out that the question before the House was on the motion to recommit the rules with instructions to the committee. He said he was opposed to both recommitting and instructing, because the real question involved, which was the retention or the rejection of the twenty-first rule, must be decided in the House, and there was no use in a recommitment. Mr. Hamlin next proceeded to enter an impersonal and yet emphatic protest on behalf of the anti-slavery men in the House against the intimidating tactics of Black, in these words:—

“The time has gone by, if it ever existed, when the galvanic starts of any member can produce an impression on this House. I for one shall vote on every question according to the dictates of my judgment. I shall vote against the motion to recommit and instruct, . . . because this question can be determined in the ordinary way of doing business. If the rules should be reported again without the twenty-first rule, it will involve the decision of the question of restoring it; if they should be reported with it, this would involve the decision of the question of abolishing it. . . . A word as to the position in which I am placed. I do not wish to have my views on this important subject mistaken, nor my votes misconstrued by giving them on mere collateral issues. I shall vote against this twenty-first rule, because I believe the right of petition to be a constitutional one, and not dependent on the judgment of any member of the House, or any other body. When this House declares in advance that it will not receive petitions of a certain class, it prejudices the matter and comes in conflict with a constitutional right. I know that any action on these petitions must proceed from the votes of a majority; and, therefore, it is inferred that a majority must decide against them in advance. But if a constitutional right can be taken away in the judgment of a majority on this question, the same thing may be done on any other question. I am in favor of rejecting the twenty-first rule, and in favor of receiving all petitions that may be offered; and I am for referring them to committees in favor of the objects embraced. Let this committee report to us what are the duties we owe—not to the South, but to the Union, the whole Union, and nothing but the Union. Then it will be seen if we do not come up to the mark; and we will stand by the Union and those institutions reared by the wisdom of our forefathers and cemented by their blood. We will stand by the Union at the expense of our lives and the desolation of our firesides. All we ask, then, is that our friends of the South will not mistake us; that they will not subject us to misconstruction on mere collateral issues. Give us but an opportunity to spread on your journal the obligations we owe to our fathers and ourselves, to perpetuate the blessings conferred by the glorious Constitution they have bequeathed us. Then it shall be seen how we shall perform our duty, not to the South, but to the whole Union.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, January 5, 1844, p. 110. Stenographic reporting had not

John Quincy Adams paid Mr. Hamlin marked attention during his speech, and when the latter had closed his remarks, Mr. Adams rose in his seat, and with a pleased smile on his face walked across the floor towards him, holding out his hand. With unusual cordiality of manner Mr. Adams grasped Mr. Hamlin's hand, and said: "Light dawneth in the East, sir; light dawneth in the East." Mr. Hamlin's attack on the gag-law won for him Mr. Adams's interest, and he always held Mr. Adams in reverence as the father of the Republican party.

The battle against the twenty-first rule was continued in the House, and ultimately Mr. Hamlin and his friends were defeated by a small vote. But they had won a victory even in defeat; Northern Democrats, like Mr. Hamlin, Preston King, John P. Hale, Jacob Brinkerhoff, Robert Dale Owen, George Rathbun, and John Wentworth rose above party affiliations when the slavery issue arose, and associated themselves with Whigs like Mr. Adams, Robert C. Schenck, Daniel Putnam King, Solomon Foot, Jacob Collamer, Caleb B. Smith, and others, many of whom are now remembered as among the founders of the party that abolished slavery. The next Congress saw Mr. Adams victorious. But it must be understood that the majority of these men were not Abolitionists in the sense the word was then used. They hoped slavery would cease to exist; they saw that the unawakened public conscience would not yet sanction direct warfare on the institution itself. They realized, therefore, that it was their duty to resist the encroachments of the slave power. Mr. Adams expressed the feelings of this group of men towards the Abolitionists when he said in a speech that, although they were a noble-minded people, they were not practical. The Abolitionists were required to agitate and educate the conscience of the masses, and practical men like Mr. Adams and his followers were needed in congressmen who were wise in the ways of a work-a-day world, who could detect a plot of the slave power when in its incipient stages in the committee room, check it resolutely on the floor of the House, — men, in short, who could successfully cope with a foe that could be as "bold as a roaring lion or as wise as a serpent."

been introduced in Congress, as this imperfect record of Mr. Hamlin's speech demonstrates.



Jacob Brinkerhoff



George Rathbun



John P. Hale



John Quincy Adams



Daniel F. King



David Willmot

ANTI-SLAVERY LEADERS IN CONGRESS OF 1845.





## CHAPTER IX

### MR. HAMLIN AS A REFORMER

THE debate on the "gag-law" brought Mr. Hamlin conspicuously before the House as a determined opponent of slavery, and yet events followed that tended to win for him the respect of his Southern colleagues, even though they did not like his views of slavery. It must be borne in mind that while slavery was as yet an intermittent issue, and did not wholly dominate legislation at Washington, it was nevertheless a sacrilege in the eyes of the slave party to denounce the institution. Hence, if a congressman publicly attacked slavery, as Mr. Hamlin did in one of his first speeches in the House, he prejudiced the Southern members against him, unless, of course, he had strong qualities that would compel respect. In this Congress the Southern men were an abler body than their Northern associates. They were the élite of the South, and trained to politics as a profession. The presence of Northern men in Congress of inferior ability and character was due to the fact that the best minds of the North were required at home to develop the professions, the educational institutions, the material resources of the nation, to foster invention, further manufacturing and the building of railroads, which would unite the country, and for the launching of other large enterprises. This inferior type of men who misrepresented Northern character represented indeed a sycophantic pro-slavery element which fawned before the slave power, and intrenched itself in power with the patronage it obtained. Men of this kind did much to blind the eyes of the South to the real character of the Northern people. They themselves were stigmatized as "dough-faces" by that picturesque individual known as "the Southern fire-eater." The epithet was not elegant, but it was truthful, it was appropriate and merited. It may be needless to add that the honesty, sincerity, independence, and ability of the group of anti-slavery men with whom Mr. Hamlin was identified placed them as individuals in the right light before the best of their Southern colleagues.

The breeze that John Quincy Adams's opening attack on the gag-law raised soon subsided, and the House returned to its regular routine. There were other important things for the House to consider; the business of the nation had to be transacted. Mr. Hamlin's

business capacity had been developed by his experience in the legislature of Maine. He devoted himself to his duties, and was soon regarded as an absolutely reliable, conscientious, and practical worker. In debate he was recognized as an effective speaker ; indeed, he was often selected to champion measures. He had the inherent editorial faculty of speaking to the point, and presenting his case briefly in his opening remarks. He never spoke for rhetorical effect, he rarely prepared a speech, and never revised one for publication. He was modest and indifferent. But his most conspicuous characteristic was brought out when the House was forming its estimate of the new members. An incident occurred that Mr. Hamlin's friends related to illustrate his conception of the duties a public man owed his country and constituents, and also his idea of honor.

One McNulty was clerk of the House. He was charged with improper practices, and had the effrontery to call the yeas and nays on a resolution ordering his dismissal. He was discharged, and Mr. Hamlin was instrumental in securing the election of Major Ben B. French, at one time a famous politician, as McNulty's successor. For this service Major French was ever afterward most grateful. One day, full of feeling, he came to Mr. Hamlin in the House and said :—

"At last, Mr. Hamlin, I have an opportunity of repaying you for your kindness to me. Three squares of the District of Columbia are to be sold, — the one for seven mills a foot, the second for five, and the third for three. We can secure this property quietly, and I know of public improvements, shortly to take place near it, which will so increase its value as to make our fortunes."

"That's all very well," said Hamlin, "but if the property were to be sold for one mill I have no money to buy it."

"In that case," replied French, after consideration, "I'll tell you what I will do. I will raise the money, and buy a portion of the property in your name. When the improvements I know of are made, and the great increase in value comes, — as it must come, — you can sell a small portion of the land and pay me what I have advanced."

"You are very kind," said Mr. Hamlin, fully grateful for the offer, "but the fact is, while there is no actual wrong in your proposition, I do not think that it would be right for me to use information which I secure as a public servant to advance my private fortune." So the matter was dropped. The principles implied in Mr. Hamlin's answer to French he lived up to all his life. The property which he might have bought for five mills a foot, as described, is now in the heart of Washington, just back of the Interior and Post-office departments, and readily sells for three dollars a foot.<sup>1</sup>

One of the first reform movements which engaged the attention of

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*.



this House was one that strongly interested Mr. Hamlin, because it touched the honor of the nation. This was a movement to keep the franchise pure, and was an outcome of the presidential election of 1840. An anomalous condition of affairs prevailed which rendered corruption easy in the elections. The election for President was not held on the same day throughout the Union. In some States the ballot-box was kept open for several days, to accommodate voters who were unable to be present on election day. In many country districts people went to bed even without locking their doors. Mr. Hamlin, for one, rarely fastened up his house in Hampden, before retiring. But the ballot-box stuffer, the burglar and tramp, were to work a change. There were signs of danger threatening the franchise, and practical statesmen were agreed that the elective methods in vogue were in need of reform. The real difficulty presented was how to handle the question without stirring up party feeling. Alexander Duncan, a Democrat, of Ohio, had the right idea of how to remedy the evils, but he did not go about it in the right way. He offered a bill in the House, making it compulsory on all the States to choose their presidential electors on the same day; but he made a violent attack on the Whigs, and charged them with carrying Ohio in 1840 by importing Kentuckians across the borders, after they had given their own State to Harrison. This angered the Whigs in the House, and tended to alienate strict state-rights Democrats, who were naturally opposed to measures strengthening the power of the general government, and would thus regard the bill in the light of a bludgeon to be used on the heads of the Whigs for mere party effect.

With the spirit of partisanship inflamed, and the fears of the strict interpreters of the Constitution aroused, the Duncan bill had poor prospects of success. Several times the bill was brought up in the House and failed to reach a vote. The debate on the measure dragged on for weeks. Mr. Hamlin was earnestly in favor of the bill, and it appears from the records that he was ultimately appointed its champion on the floor of the House. After the discussion had developed into an unusually acrimonious wrangle one day, the bill was brought up, and a great effort was made to secure a vote. Mr. Hamlin took the floor and made a speech that illustrates his clear and concise style of argument. A little tact was needed to soothe the ruffled feelings of the disputing members. In his opening remarks, Mr. Hamlin quietly referred to the unfortunate partisan discussion which attended the introduction of the bill, and said that while he had once desired to make a reply to charges against his party, he had changed his mind and would confine himself exclusively to the bill and its merits.

"This bill," said Mr. Hamlin, "is intended to prevent — and I believe it will, if it has favorable action — frauds that have hitherto been perpetrated

in our elections. I have no accusations to bring against any political parties ; I have no criminations or recriminations to make ; I have simply to say that I believe the bill will prevent frauds and preserve, as far as is possible, the great and fundamental principles of the elective franchise in their purity. If there is a principle that addresses itself with greater force than any other to American statesmen, it is the principle involved in this question. If we can by any legislative action preserve and protect the rights of electors, it is our duty to take such action. The question, then, arises, Can we adopt a measure regulating the time for holding elections ? Have we the constitutional right ? By reference to the fourth clause of the first section of the second article of the Constitution, it will be found that the States gave Congress the clear and undoubted right to determine the time when the elections shall be held. I will read the clause : —

“ ‘The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors and the day on which they shall give their votes, which day shall be the same throughout the United States.’

“ There is a variety of causes and circumstances that might induce a State to be in favor of holding the presidential election at the same time as the state elections ; and other periods might be selected by other States for good and sufficient reasons ; but by the law now in existence all the States are compelled to hold their elections for presidential electors within a period of thirty days from the first Monday of December. Now, by changing the period of the elections for President, it would not affect the State elections. We do not ask the States to alter the manner and place of holding their elections, but only to fix on a particular day. Another objection has been offered ; that it would compel, in certain cases, two elections, inasmuch as some of the States elect their presidential electors and state officers on the same day. Having taken some pains to inform myself on this matter, I have ascertained that there are only two States in which two elections are held on one day. I am opposed to the amendment of the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Elmer), because it is unnecessary. The bill reported by the Committee on Elections is sufficient without the aid of any additional regulation. The Constitution gives Congress the power to prescribe the day for holding the presidential election, and no other power on that subject. Congress can fix on the time, but not on the place and manner. It has been suggested that the passage of this act would require a convention of the legislatures of several of the States to carry it into effect. This I do not believe to be the case ; but even if it were so, I should vote for the bill.”<sup>1</sup>

This speech brought the House to a vote. The bill was passed by a large majority, and sent to the Senate ; but the Whigs were still in control of that body, and although approving the purposes of the measure, they laid it on the table by a strict party vote, because they did not desire their opponents to obtain the credit that would come from the passage of a bill which would in its enactment work

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, May 15, 1844, p. 634.

salutary reforms, and create capital for its Democratic sponsors. Nevertheless, the friends of the bill were not discouraged, and prepared themselves to renew the fight for a pure ballot at the next session of Congress, when they were successful.

When Mr. Hamlin came to Washington he heard loud complaints from old soldiers of the war of 1812, and also from heirs of veterans, over the difficulties they had in obtaining bounty lands from the government to which they were entitled. Mr. Hamlin's experience while a member of the legislature of Maine with this subject determined him to probe it, and try to remove the obstacles of which the veterans complained. In Mr. Hamlin's opinion the government was pursuing a mistaken policy in withholding from the public the names of those who deserved the lands. The explanation furnished by the government authorities for this course was that the Pension Department was infested with unscrupulous claim agents who made a business of hunting up claimants and cheating them, often getting fully one half of the land involved in payment for their alleged services. But to a broad-minded man it was evident that while the government might save some claimants from dishonest agents in the end, it would prevent by this course many heirs from learning that they were entitled to government land. Thus, between the government's over-caution, departmental red tape, the cunning of the claim agents, and the ignorance or feebleness of claimants or their heirs, many found themselves unable to obtain bounty land which they were morally certain belonged to them.

One of the first things Mr. Hamlin did after taking his seat in the House was to strike at the root of this evil by offering a resolution calling upon the Secretary of War to furnish the House with a list of the names of those who were entitled to bounty lands, of those who had not received warrants, and also those who had obtained patents but had not procured warrants. This resolution aroused the conservative spirit of the House. Cave Johnson, of Tennessee, was a good example of the honest but narrow class of congressmen who instinctively clung to precedent and feared departure from beaten tracks. Mr. Johnson opposed Mr. Hamlin's resolution on the grounds that the publication of names of those deserving bounty lands would not benefit the widows and orphans, but speculators and agents. William P. Thomasson,<sup>1</sup> of Kentucky, supported Mr. Johnson, and told the House that he himself had called at the War Department to obtain information about a claim, and that it was refused, though he gave the name of the claimant; that Mr. Johnson had informed him that this was the practice of the department, because making public

<sup>1</sup> Thomasson was one of the few Southern anti-slavery members of Congress. He became a Republican, and was one of Mr. Hamlin's personal friends.



information about the claims would help the agents and speculators, who were constantly on watch for their chance to prey on applicants for bounties. For these reasons Mr. Thomasson said he was unwilling to depart from the government's custom.

Mr. Hamlin replied by showing that the fact that Mr. Thomasson, a member of the House, could not obtain information at the War Department about a just claim for bounty lands, that he could not learn from the government's books the names of the people he knew to be interested in land claims, was a convincing reason in itself why the House should adopt the resolution he, Mr. Hamlin, had offered. Addressing himself to Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hamlin asked, if the government expressed a willingness through its laws to reward those who had imperiled their lives for it, was it proper to withhold evidence that would show to whom reward was due? "Would the gentleman from Tennessee," Mr. Hamlin continued, "stand like a miser over his gold, and refuse the relief offered? . . . But is it to be the policy of this government to say to meritorious citizens, 'We will give you this bounty land,' and the same moment turn and say in the same breath, 'We will withhold from you the very information which will enable you to enjoy the benefits we offer'? Is this not 'to keep the word of promise to the ear and break it to our hope'?"<sup>1</sup>

John P. Hale supported Mr. Hamlin's resolution, and asserted that the publication of the information desired would tend to defeat the speculators. Mr. Hopkins, of Virginia, strengthened the argument in favor of the resolution by pointing out that concealment alone would aid unscrupulous agents in their designs on worthy land claimants. In fact, under the present system they had managed to bribe clerks to give them data that placed claimants in their hands. The House came to the opinion that Mr. Hamlin was right, and that it was better to transact public business in the open light. The resolution was passed by a vote of two to one, and Mr. Hamlin soon enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing many a veteran of 1812 rewarded for his services. It may be added, without anticipating, that this was the beginning of a long service to the country's old soldiers which earned Mr. Hamlin the lasting gratitude of many a home.

While Mr. Hamlin was endeavoring to work a reform in the pension office, he was also lending his aid to the movement to obtain cheaper postage. During the first few days of his membership in the House, he introduced a petition praying for lower postal rates, and then joined with prominent members of the House in an effort to pass a bill to accomplish the desired reform. This was one of the many topics which Mr. Hamlin and his "mess" associates considered, and one outcome of their deliberations was a bill that was offered

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, December 27, 1843, p. 76.

by Preston King making uniform reduction in the cost of transporting mail. The public was strongly in favor of the reform. In a speech by Charles H. Carroll, of New York, a circumstance was brought out that in these days seems amazing. Mr. Carroll said that it cost one cent and three quarters more to transport a letter from Geneva, N. Y., to New York city, than it did to transport a barrel of flour between the same places. The timidity and conservatism of the government were the real obstacles to the success of this reform movement. It was feared that a reduction in postage rates would make the Post-office Department a burden to the government. A general understanding was arrived at in the House, that action should be deferred until the petition in circulation throughout the country had been laid before the House.

In the mean time the desire for postal reform increased among the progressive people of the country, and when Congress reconvened a determined effort was made to reduce the postal rates from an excessive average of fifteen and one half cents to a uniform rate of five cents a letter; at the same time it was planned to make an attempt to abolish the franking privilege, which had become a great abuse. Opposition to the reform was strong, and was chiefly based on the plea that a sweeping reduction of postage rates would decrease the revenues of the Post-office Department to so low a figure that the service would become a burden on the national treasury. A reading of the debates on this question discloses the different points of view the Northern and Southern congressmen held on economic questions. In this instance, the Southern members were influenced to a considerable extent by their ideas of state rights, which seemed sometimes to act on them with the force of a religion, and to be the conscious or unconscious motive of their acts. Sectional considerations also operated among them. Mr. Hamlin favored the bill, and he made several speeches in which he embodied the Northern argument in favor of it.<sup>1</sup> The main idea was that as cheap postage had increased the business of the Post-office Department in England, and tended to spread intelligence throughout the masses, the same measures ought to bring about the same results in the United States. As a simpler illustration he showed that the reduction of postal rates, like the reduction of railroad and steamboat fares, would also increase the business and revenue of the Post-office Department.

These views, however, were not accepted by the Southern members as a rule. Howell Cobb feared that the contemplated reduction was too radical, and, moreover, would lodge too much power in the Post-office Department. William L. Yancey supported Mr. Cobb's argument, and claimed that only the large cities favored the reform. It

<sup>1</sup> Principal speech, February 24, 1845, *Congressional Globe*, p. 339.

was his belief that this would be taxing the many for the benefit of the few. Mr. Hopkins, of Virginia, asserted that the government could never compete with the private expresses that now transacted a large amount of the postal business. But the *reductio ad absurdum* was a speech by William W. Payne. In reply to Mr. Hamlin he said that the postal bill was a New York and New England measure, and that the letter writers who paid the cost of postage were merchants, business men, love-sick swains, and city belles. They should be made to pay it.

But without going into the subject further, it may be added that although the five-cent bill passed the Senate, it did not triumph in the House. An amendment was added establishing five cents as the rate for letters under 300 miles, and ten cents over that distance. The progressive and unprogressive elements in the House divided on this bill almost identically as they did on the slavery question. Eighty-five members, including Mr. Hamlin, John P. Hale, Preston King, Jacob Collamer, Daniel Putnam King, Hamilton Fish, Caleb B. Smith, Robert C. Schenck, Joshua R. Giddings, George Rathbun, Freeman H. Morse, Alexander Ramsay, and others who generally affiliated on progressive matters voted against this amendment; but 110 voted for it, and the Senate concurred on the principle that "half a loaf was better than no bread." The franking privilege remained unchanged. The beginning of postal reform has thus been briefly described in order to show Mr. Hamlin's interest in it. He accomplished more work in the committee room than in debate. He retained his interest in this reform movement when he entered the Senate, and when more important results were attained. From the first he opposed the franking privilege. But this is anticipating, and the narrative returns to the chronological order of events — beginning with the annexation of Texas.



## CHAPTER X

### THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

MR. HAMLIN accepted an invitation to join President Tyler and a party in a trip down the Potomac River, on the man-of-war Princeton, of the United States Navy, on February 28, 1844, when a new gun that had been added to the Princeton's armament was to be tested. As he was about to proceed to the ship, Mr. Hamlin unexpectedly found that his presence was required in the House, and to his regret he was compelled to forego what he had expected would be a very pleasant outing. But it proved to be a day of tragic and portentous significance for the entire nation. The gun exploded, killed Mr. Upshur, the Secretary of State, Mr. Gilmer, the Secretary of the Navy, and nine others, and also wounded nine sailors. It happened that President Tyler had stepped into the cabin just before the gun was fired, and so escaped injury. The death of Mr. Upshur had a momentous effect on this administration. Mr. Tyler had schemed to annex Texas in order to give lustre to his administration, and also in the hope that he would be enabled to force the Democratic party to nominate him for President. To this end Mr. Tyler had negotiated a treaty with Texas, looking to the annexation of the young republic with the Union, when Mr. Upshur's tragic death interrupted the proceedings. The Democratic party took the practical view of the situation, and favored the annexation of Texas; the Whigs opposed the project on the ground that it might involve the United States in a war with Mexico. Like an inspiration, the thought came to Henry A. Wise that the master-hand of John C. Calhoun could guide the Democratic party to success in the emergency now presented, and he induced Mr. Tyler, against his personal preference, to make Mr. Calhoun the successor to Mr. Upshur. Here was a young nation on our borders asking to be taken into our Union as a sister State, and increase our domain and power. The fact was that Texas was able to separate itself from Mexico, and maintain itself as an independent community by its own efforts. Now, if the United States did not accept its offer, there was manifest danger that Texas might remain an isolated power, and become a prey for adventurous European governments, a danger that was well exemplified only twenty years afterwards, when Louis Napoleon attempted to seat Maximilian in Mexico on a throne propped up by bayonets.

Mr. Calhoun emerged from the retirement into which Jackson had driven him, and became the Secretary of State. He favored the annexation of Texas, and, moreover, his comprehensive mind grasped the great possibilities of party success in a joint Northern and Southern movement to acquire more land for the Union. The Texas question also suggested the advisability of adjusting the boundary line of Oregon with Great Britain. Thus, before the National Democratic Convention met at Baltimore, in May, Mr. Calhoun had already provided it with winning issues. The proposal to increase the nation's territory fired the Democratic party with zeal and enthusiasm; but it must be added that Mr. Calhoun had an ulterior motive in raising these issues besides seeking party success. Mr. Van Buren and Mr. Clay had both written letters opposing the annexation of Texas. Mr. Calhoun, believing that Mr. Van Buren had robbed him of the presidency by poisoning Jackson's mind against him, was naturally desirous of avenging himself upon him. Mr. Calhoun seized on Mr. Van Buren's opposition to the annexation of Texas as a means of defeating his aspirations for renomination. Mr. Calhoun welded the slave States into a compact body against Mr. Van Buren, and accomplished his defeat in the convention by enforcing the two thirds rule. When a deadlock seemed imminent, James K. Polk was brought forward as a compromise candidate, and nominated amidst enthusiasm. Silas Wright was named for Vice-President, but declined, and in five minutes sent a dispatch to Baltimore to that effect.<sup>1</sup> He was Mr. Van Buren's confidential friend. George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, was substituted. The Whigs having nominated Mr. Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen as their leaders, this session of Congress closed amidst preparations for one of the most important and exciting presidential elections in the history of the country.

Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine after the adjournment of Congress, and was renominated for another term. Although he preferred Mr. Van Buren, he accepted Polk's nomination, and supported him loyally. Mr. Hamlin was a strong party man, and believed that the right would prevail in the end. No man had yet arrived who possessed the power of prophecy or divination; the truth was but half suspected, — that Mr. Polk had been secretly selected by the slave power weeks before the convention nominated him. Mr. Polk was a man of irreproachable private character, and his candidacy was received by his party with great favor, except among Mr. Van Buren's intimate friends, although Mr. Wright, for the sake of the party, waived his own feelings, and became the Democratic candidate

<sup>1</sup> The telegraph had just been established, and the convention did not know whether to believe Wright's dispatch of declination. A committee was sent to Washington to ascertain the truth.

for governor of New York. It was his influence that decided the result of the campaign, for New York elected Mr. Polk. Mr. Clay soon perceived that the Democratic party was making great progress with the slogan, "Annex Texas; 54° 40' or fight." The South would naturally look with favor on a plan to increase its slave territory, and as the feeling against Great Britain, on account of the war of 1812, had not yet died out, the cry, "54° 40' or fight," roused a spirit of enthusiasm that nearly threatened to bring on another war with that nation. To his great mortification, Mr. Clay found himself for the first time on the defensive in a political campaign. To stem the turning of the tide, Mr. Clay wrote a letter denying that he was opposed to the annexation of Texas, and adding that he would be glad to have Texas brought into the Union under honorable conditions. This so-called Alabama letter was Mr. Clay's death warrant. It drove a sufficient number of anti-slavery Whigs of New York into the ranks of the Abolition party to give that State to Mr. Polk. It weakened Mr. Clay even in Kentucky. In the gubernatorial election in Kentucky that occurred in the month of August, William O. Butler, the Democratic candidate, cut down the Whig majority from 28,000 votes to less than 5000. This reduction of strength in Mr. Clay's own home created consternation among his friends and proportionate jubilation among the Democrats. Before this, Mr. Hamlin was but little known outside of Maine as a campaign speaker. After the Kentucky election, Mr. Hamlin made a speech that attracted considerable attention to him beyond the borders of his own State. In characterizing Mr. Clay's attitude towards Texas, which was called "facing two ways," Mr. Hamlin said that Clay, after the Kentucky election, reminded him of the old woman who went to sleep on the highway, to wake up and find that her petticoats had been cut off about her knees. She lamented:—

"If this be I as I hope it be,  
I have a little dog at home and he knows me.  
If it be I he will wag his little tail;  
If it be not I he will loudly bark and loudly wail.'  
Forth went the little woman all in the dark,  
Up jumped the little dog and began to bark.  
Up jumped the little woman and began to cry,  
'Lawk a mercy on us, this is none of I.'

"Kentucky, my friends," observed Mr. Hamlin, "does not know her old woman." Campaign oratory, it need not be added, was then noted for vigor, sarcasm, and its personal nature. This rude shaft proved exceedingly effective and was widely used as an apt, if homely, illustration of Mr. Clay's unfortunate predicament.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin made his first speech in New York city in this campaign. He addressed a large audience at Castle Garden.



In the Maine election, the total poll was over 90,000 votes, a gain of more than 30,000 over the previous year, which indicated the great interest the campaign commanded in the Pine Tree State. The Democrats reëlected Governor Anderson, a popular and able man, by 10,000 majority. Mr. Hamlin was reëlected by a large majority over Abraham Sanborn, a Whig of ability as a campaign orator and a leading lawyer of Bangor. For several weeks after the presidential election in November the result was not generally known, owing to the delay of getting the returns from New York, and the lack of facilities for spreading the news. Democrats and Whigs alike passed through agonies of uncertainties. Mr. Hamlin awaited the result at his home in Hampden. One day a group of Democrats gathered before the little village post-office to wait for the news, when a horseman was seen in the dim distance on the old Boston highway, galloping towards Hampden like mad. In his hand he held a long shining thing, and there was curious speculation as to what it was and what the man was doing. When he came a little nearer he lifted the shining object to his mouth; it was a speaking-trumpet, and the impatient Democrats were transported with almost uncontrollable joy when they heard these words: "Polk elected; New York goes for him by 5000 majority." In a cloud of dust the jubilant and smiling messenger dashed on to carry the glad tidings of Polk's election to Bangor. In this way the news of Polk's victory was spread throughout Maine. Polk had a popular majority of about a quarter of a million of votes and an emphatic majority in the electoral college. The significance of the election was that the people favored the annexation of Texas and the reoccupation of Oregon.

An incident that followed the election of Polk indicates Mr. Hamlin's position as a leader in the House. Shortly before the adjournment of Congress some members of the House asked him to be a candidate for speaker at the next session, when a new House would come into existence. He said nothing about this, however, at the time to his colleagues from Maine. But after the presidential election he received a letter from Major French, clerk of the House, who wrote that, judging from what the incoming members of the next House were saying, Mr. Hamlin stood as good a chance as anybody to succeed to the speaker's chair. Mr. Hamlin, however, made no effort, so far as is known, to become speaker. He never mentioned the affair to his family. All he did that is a matter of record was to lay the facts in a letter before Robert P. Dunlap, who had been governor of Maine, and was then in the House and a personal friend. In this letter he expressed no desire for the speaker's chair, but asked Mr. Dunlap's opinion. Oldtime politicians of Maine remembered that Mr. Hamlin's name was freely used in

connection with the speakership, which appears to have been the beginning and the end of the affair. His name was not presented. The tone of his letter to Governor Dunlap indicated that he had doubts whether it would be worth while to make a contest. He knew that the slave party was in control, and would probably choose a man of its own. This was the case. But the incident was a compliment worth noting.

Congress reconvened in another month, and the Democratic members returned to Washington rejoicing over the brilliant victory their party had achieved. But when the Texas affair began rapidly to develop its real aspect, the happiness of the anti-slavery Democrats changed to apprehension. The fact was the North had only dimly realized the danger to free institutions involved in the admission of Texas into the Union. The North had, indeed, good reasons for believing that a part, if not half, of Texas would be free. Up to this time it had been a part of the unwritten Constitution of the United States to preserve the balance between the free and slave States of the Union by admitting new States in pairs,—one free, the other slave. Texas had enough land for five States, and if the anti-slavery voters of the North had grasped the purpose of the slave power to seize that immense territory for slavery, Mr. Polk would never have been elected President. In the presidential campaign there were developments that disturbed far-seeing men; a frenzy seemed to possess the slave party in several Southern States. The cry of "Texas with or without the Union" was often heard. Declarations of this kind were regarded by the great masses of loyal people in all parts of the country as utterances of superheated, irresponsible fire-eaters. This belief had some truth for its foundation, and yet the excited condition of the South over the issue of annexation was the result of a systematic agitation which was begun in order to create a demand in the South for the admission of Texas into the Union as a slave State.

When Mr. Calhoun became secretary of state he perceived that the plans of the slave power could not succeed without the aid of Southern Whigs. Personally, Mr. Calhoun was a pure and honorable man, but his failure to reach the presidency had embittered him probably more than he realized. He believed in slavery as a patriarchal institution; he defended it with the intensity of a fanatic, and saw its opponents with a distorted vision. Just prior to Mr. Calhoun's entrance into President Tyler's Cabinet, some Abolitionists conceived a plan to purchase the slaves of Texas and set them free. They visited London in the hope of inducing the English government to help them raise the money needed,—\$10,000,000. It had been England's policy to encourage emancipation, since she had freed



the last of her slaves ten years before this ; but in this instance Great Britain could not act without incurring the danger of bringing on a war with the United States and Texas too. Assistance was refused the Abolitionists, and the British government, through Lord Aberdeen, informed Secretary Upshur, ten days before the latter's tragic death, that while it was England's policy to encourage emancipation throughout the world, it would neither secretly nor openly resort to any measure that would tend to disturb the domestic tranquillity of the slaveholding States. This was an explicit and honorable declaration, and yet Mr. Calhoun and his coöperators saw in it only a revelation of a Machiavelian policy, — an intention on England's part to thwart the annexation of Texas. When Mr. Calhoun became secretary of state he made effective use of the Abolition incident to elect Mr. Polk and to intensify Southern sentiment in favor of annexation, by charging England with hostility to the slaveholding policy of the country. Thus Mr. Calhoun stirred Southern hatred of the abolitionist, and national dislike for the English government. In a letter of instructions to William R. King, the American minister to France, Mr. Calhoun said that England regarded the defeat of annexation "as indispensable to the abolition of slavery in Texas," that "England was too sagacious not to see what a fatal blow abolition in Texas would give to slavery in the United States," and finally, that the effect of the abolition of slavery "to this continent would be calamitous beyond description."

Mr. Calhoun and his faction continued to harp on these themes even after the election of Mr. Polk, and their object is easy to understand. When Congress resumed its session, and the purpose of the slave power to grab all of Texas was revealed, there were signs of a defection of the anti-slavery Democrats from their party. Mr. Hamlin and his associates were justly indignant, and vehemently in private and in public denounced their Southern party colleagues for their practical breach of faith and abandonment of custom. The anger of the Northern anti-slavery men in Congress was after all only an episode in the eyes of the crafty slave power. The next thing to do was to win over the men needed, and to do that the Calhoun party kept Southern excitement up to the fever pitch as long as they could, in hopes the requisite number of Southern Whigs would yield under the pressure of public sentiment, and deliver Texas over to slavery. The final step Mr. Calhoun arranged was to rush Texas into the Union by forcing through Congress joint resolutions framed by his adroit brain. Senator Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, was chosen to manage the resolutions. On December 12, Charles J. Ingersoll, of Pennsylvania, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations and a Northern man with Southern principles, introduced the resolutions into the



House, and the battle was begun that closed two decades afterwards.

The measure presented by Mr. Ingersoll only "cleared the deck for action." In general terms it provided for the admission of Texas into the Union, the appointment of a commission to investigate questions that needed settlement, and other details which do not require recapitulation. But not one word was said about slavery; no intimation was given of the slave power's intention to make five States out of Texas in order that they could send ten senators and at least twice as many representatives to Congress in the interests of the slave oligarchy. The debate that opened a few days later was not an oratorical contest of note, but an exposition of the diametrically opposite views the North and the South held on slavery, and another proof that there could no longer be any compromise on that issue, because it had become a political factor which was to be settled only in the last court, — the field of war. But prophets had not yet arrived who were to be believed in their day, and the battle over Texas was regarded as a great political contest, although the nation's degradation was keenly felt at the North, and fears for the country's future aroused over the display of the slave party's power and arrogance.

In another respect the debate was interesting and important as an exposition of the Southern belief in slavery as a useful and beneficent institution, and also that the North made war on the South through tariffs, laws, and bounties. As the slave party controlled the situation far more surely than its opponents knew, the leaders did not favor the making of speeches that would tend to inflame the Northern congressmen; but they could not hold some of their own number in check, and there were a few outbursts of more than ordinary interest in the course of the debate. William L. Yancey, of Alabama, was one of the most eloquent and extreme representatives in the House of the selfish, sectional spirit of the slave party. He was a man of great ability, though of a vindictive nature. He hated the anti-slavery men, and was not unwilling to stoop to the tactics of the demagogue to "fire the Southern heart" against them. Mr. Yancey was one of the first to lead off in the debate on Texas, and his speech is one of peculiar interest, because he made a base attack on New England, to which Mr. Hamlin replied, and an onslaught on Thomas L. Clingman, a Whig, of North Carolina, who was opposed to annexation, which brought on a duel. With extreme Southern men like Mr. Yancey it was a favorite practice to slur New England as a centre of disunion on account of the Hartford convention and the ideas of the Abolitionists, for both of which New England could not be held responsible. Two brief extracts from Yancey's speech will suffice to illustrate. "Looking at New England," said he, "I see her plains

made fertile and her villages springing up by the bounties wrung from the South." "Men are now there," he continued, "who, forgetful of their fathers, are seeking to weaken the bonds of the Union, and are content to live on the bounty wrung from the sweat of Southern brows." But of more importance was Mr. Yancey's declaration, bold and unqualified, that "the slaveholding States were losing their relative strength in the representative branch of the government," that "they had compromised away all possibility of retaining an equality in the Senate by the fatal Missouri Compromise," and finally, that "the highest considerations of individual, sectional, and national interests urged the South on to annexation."

Several other speeches were made following the lead of Mr. Yancey's remarks, although not so severe in their reflections on New England. Isaac E. Holmes, of South Carolina, a man of generous disposition and honorable nature, but who was naturally imbued with the Southern idea of New England, claimed that that section opposed annexation for purely commercial reasons, and in further allusion to the anti-slavery movement said that a tremendous whirlwind was gathering in blackness and fury to drink up all that was estimable in Southern institutions. "Men," he continued, "have talked of dividing this country in two parts, from one of which slavery is to be excluded. A Southerner who would agree to this — a Southerner who would manacle and fetter the energies of his children — must be either a knave or a fool. Admit Texas and give us but two slave States, what will our condition be? With our exhausted soil, a dense population which without a field for industry and enterprise must grow idle, let gentlemen figure the consequences for themselves."

It is not necessary to pursue this line of Southern argument further. Anti-slavery men met and refuted it when it was advanced. The development of the manufacturing interests of the South subsequent to 1865 completely upset this theory. But at this time something else claimed the attention of the anti-slavery men in Congress, and that was the avowal of the extreme pro-slavery leaders that they would not restrict their ambitions for extending slavery with the annexation of Texas. Another thing was becoming clearer, and that was the fact that the slave party was growing more confident with the progress of the debate of its ability to force the joint resolutions through the House. There were reports that the slave leaders had been promising the patronage of the incoming administration to unscrupulous and dough-face Northern Democrats, which were unhappily verified. Realizing the tremendous efforts the slave party was making to push the joint resolutions through Congress, and that the chances of success were favorable, and having a clear idea of the practical difficulties before the anti-slavery men, Mr. Hamlin resolved to

present a dispassionate view of the annexation issue in the hope, faint though it was, that the South might yet be brought to see that a compromise ought to be effected which would satisfy the North. On January 23, 1845, he made a speech on Texas that was conciliatory in tone, though firm in its denunciation of slavery. Mr. Hamlin was then thirty-four years old. This speech was inadequately reported in the "Congressional Record," the eulogy on New England was even omitted entirely. His poetic tribute to New England was saved by the newspaper correspondents, who sent it out over the country. The speech was in part as follows :—

"We have a country stretching from the frozen regions of the North to the tropical climate of the South. We have a seacoast extending from the rocky shores of New England, washed by the Atlantic, to our western boundary, bathed by the peaceful waters of the Pacific, vast in extent, and embracing in its circuit almost every climate and almost every industrial pursuit known to the world. It must occur to every thinking mind that a government stretching its powers over such a vast domain must be one of compromise. On compromise our Republican form of government was based. Viewing the question of the annexation of Texas in such a light, let us come to the consideration of it with feelings and purposes equal to its importance. Gentlemen who have preceded me in this debate have so ably discussed the constitutional question involved that I shall not enter upon it. I shall content myself with simply saying on this point . . . that I will give my sanction to the annexation of Texas upon conditions and restrictions which will make it what I claim it to be, a national question. Moreover, I am for immediate annexation, although I had indulged the hope that the consummation of this measure would have been left to the coming administration, which will have, as I trust and believe it will, the confidence of the people. The present administration possesses the respect and confidence of no party and no man. . . .

"I first propose to show that this question has not been presented to the House in a national aspect, and I shall then proceed to show in what manner it ought to be presented. . . .

"I regret that this great and important national question has been dragged down, down, down from its proper sphere to a wretched, contemptible, and groveling position. Let us trace the development of this question from its first appearance in this hall to its present aspect. I know that the acquisition of Texas has been the desideratum of several administrations for national purposes, purposes which I approve. But what is the origin of the measure of the annexation of a foreign power to this Union? A mere rumor reported in a letter . . . that the British government designed to abolish slavery in the republic of Texas. . . . This was the basis on which the authorities of Texas were invited to open negotiations with this country. Yes, an idle rumor had force enough to engage the attention of our government.

"This is an attempt to strengthen the slave power. Let us examine the



correspondence of the Tyler administration on this subject, which shows that the object of annexing Texas is to uphold and extend slavery, and the alleged design of the British government to abolish slavery in Texas has been brought to bear upon the annexation issue. I quote from Mr. Calhoun's elaborate argument defending slavery and urging the annexation of Texas as a means of maintaining the institution. . . .

"What! is it true that the slave institution in this country is the great upholder of the power in this Republic? Is it the means of spreading civilization over the world? . . . If we should return home and tell our constituents that we voted for annexation on such principles and with such a name, we should be pronounced recreant to our duty, traitors to our country. I deny Mr. Calhoun's reasonings and conclusions. If the government should extend its domain for such as he sets forth, it would give national power, importance, and dignity to a purely local affair.

"The general government has no right to interfere with slavery. But if the government can extend the institution for an alleged beneficial purpose, it can restrict it. . . . This is an attempt to make a national question of a purely state issue, and those who are endeavoring to give it a national character would be swift indeed to prevent Congress from taking a restrictive action. The question of annexation is fully and clearly national, not one where the government should act for a cause over which it has no right to interfere. . . . I myself am in favor of the abstract proposition of annexation, and I am willing to leave the details for the future if they could be fairly settled. . . . That the people decided in favor of annexation in the last election, I believe; that they prescribed and settled the details, I do not believe. . . . In my State we took the ground that recourse must be had to compromise, but we concluded that it would be the means of admitting more free States than slave States. I refer you also to the resolutions adopted by the legislature of New Hampshire — I also refer you to the bill introduced into the Senate by Mr. Hayward, the senator from North Carolina, a bill which speaks much for his heart, but more for his head.

"Of slavery I do not intend to speak. The eloquent Pinckney spoke for me when he declared that slavery's footsteps were marked with blight wherever it had touched the earth; but again I say, I am willing to enter into compromise, because I believe that annexation is of national importance. It will promote Northern commerce, agriculture, and industrial pursuits; it will also benefit the South in giving the monopoly of the cotton-growing industry for the supply of foreign markets. . . . I am desirous that a portion of this territory should be left free for the industry of Northern people. When they shall have established themselves, leveled the forests, cultivated the earth, built up their industries, I would leave it to them whether they would admit slavery. There would be no fear of that.

"I recall the jeers and taunts that have been thrown out in the progress of this debate, and when I heard them, my heart impelled me to hurl them back. Reflection, however, has softened my indignation. It does not become public men in discussing great national questions to descend to

taunts and to provoke sectional feelings and prejudices. If there are any here who can find consolation in this kind of debate, they are welcome to it. I protest against the reproaches that have been heaped upon the North. If the North has acted wickedly, I offer for her no apologies—that wickedness was not the crime of her people; it belonged to her politicians alone. . . . The hardy sons of the ice-bound regions of New England have poured out their blood without stint to protect the shores of the South, and to avenge her wrongs. Their bones are even now bleaching beneath the sun on many a Southern hill; and the monuments of their brave devotion may still be traced wherever their country's flag has floated on the battlefield or in the breeze, upon the lakes, the ocean, and the land.

“ ‘ New England's dead ! New England's dead !

On every field they lie,

On every field of strife made red

With bloody victory.

Their bones are on our Northern hills,

And on the Southern plain ;

By brooks and river, mount and rills,

And in the sounding main.’

“ I glory in New England and New England's institutions. There she stands with her free schools and her free labor, her fearless enterprise, her indomitable energy ! With her rocky hills, her torrent streams, her green valleys, her heavenward-pointed spires, there she stands a moral monument around which the gratitude of her country binds the wreath of fame, while protected freedom shall repose forever at its base.

“ While I thus glory in New England, however, I meet not my Southern brethren with any brand of discord, but with the olive branch of peace. I meet them in the spirit of harmony ; still, I desire above other considerations to meet them on even ground,—a ground alike respectful to the North and the South,—and I invoke them to perform this great national act,—the annexation of Texas—that Southern and Northern hearts may rejoice to behold the stars and stripes floating together over the rich and fertile Texan plains. I ask, will not the gentlemen of the South meet us here ? Will they not rescue this measure alike from danger and reproach and put it in a form which will gratify us all ? I entreat them to look at the question in all the lights of cool reflection before they finally reject the compromise which, while it secures them an inestimable benefit, does equal justice to all sections and all interests of the Union.”

The resolutions to annex Texas were now to be read for the last time before a vote was taken, when Stephen A. Douglas, whose presidential ambition had not then eaten away his sagacity, offered an amendment providing that the States to be formed out of Texas be admitted to the Union with or without slavery as their people should desire. This was rejected by a majority of only eleven votes. Mr. Hamlin promptly presented another amendment providing that the terms on which the new States should be admitted to the Union should be de-

terminated by Congress at the time of admission and in accordance with the Constitution. But this was rejected, and so were other amendments presented or framed to secure some recognition of the anti-slavery sentiment of the North. The result of all these efforts was to secure the adoption of an amendment offered by Stephen A. Douglas providing that there should be no slavery in any territory of the States to be formed out of Texas that laid north of the Missouri Compromise line. This was practically a reaffirmation of the Missouri Compromise. The only honorable course left for all members of the House who favored annexation, but who were opposed to it as a means of extending slavery, was to vote against the joint resolutions. The resolutions were passed by a vote of 120 to 98. An analysis of the vote shows that nearly thirty Northern Democrats braved the slave power on this occasion and that some eight Southern Whigs yielded to it. A few changes of votes would obviously have defeated the joint resolutions and thus compelled the framing of a fairer measure. Among the Democrats who put their country before their party in this struggle were: Preston King, George Rathbun, J. E. Cary, Joseph H. Anderson, Charles S. Benton, Amasa Dana, Richard D. Davis, Byram Green, Horace Wheaton, Orville Robinson, David L. Seymour, Lemuel B. Stetson, and S. M. Purdy, all of New York; Edward S. Hamlin and Jacob Brinkerhoff, of Ohio; John P. Hale and John R. Reding, of New Hampshire; George S. Catlin and John Stewart, of Connecticut; Joshua Herrick, Robert P. Dunlap, and Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine; Henry Williams, of Massachusetts; Paul Dillingham, Jr., of Vermont, and James B. Hunt and Robert McClelland, of Michigan. Prominent among the Whigs who were actuated by high moral reasons rather than political were John Quincy Adams, Daniel Putnam King, Joshua R. Giddings, Robert C. Schenck, Samuel F. Vinton, Washington Hunt, Hamilton Fish, Caleb B. Smith, Freeman H. Morse and Luther Severance, of Maine, Solomon Foot, and Jacob Collamer. The old proverb, "Politics makes strange bedfellows," is illustrated in finding Thomas L. Clingman in company with these Whigs, — a man whose principles and friendship for Clay held him against the annexation of Texas, but whose attachment to his State led him to favor disunion in 1860. In this portentous division on the slave issue, it is significant to find Alexander H. Stephens as the leader of the small handful of Whigs who deserted their party to serve the interests of the slave power. John B. Ashe, Milton Brown, James H. Payton and William T. Senter, of Tennessee, A. H. Chappell, of Georgia, and James Dellet, of Alabama, were the other Whigs who followed the lead of the coming Vice-President of the Confederacy in this issue. They worked hand in hand with Democrats who became conspicuous disunionists, — Howell Cobb, Jacob Thompson, John Slidell, William L.



Yancey, Thomas L. Seymour, and R. Barnwell Rhett. The strength of the slave party is better appreciated when the fact is recorded that others who supported this measure were John W. Davis, of Indiana, who was speaker of the next House; Charles J. Ingersoll, of Pennsylvania, an influential member of Northern birth and Southern principles; Aaron V. Brown, Mr. Polk's law partner and postmaster-general under Buchanan; Cave Johnson, who held the same office under Polk; Stephen A. Douglas, whose presidential aspirations split the Democratic party in 1860, and Andrew Johnson, who was then a consistent defender of slavery.

The last chapter in the story of the joint resolutions of annexation is of personal interest. In the Senate there was a small group of Democrats who opposed the House resolutions for fear that the annexation of Texas, accomplished by their adoption, would bring on a war with Mexico. Thomas H. Benton was the leader of these men, and he succeeded in inducing the Senate to pass an amendment to the House bill providing for the annexation of Texas by negotiation with Mexico. President-elect Polk, who was now in Washington in conference with President Tyler in regard to the annexation of Texas, gave his assurance to several senators, that if Colonel Benton's amendment was passed by Congress, he would act within its lines and appoint a commission, composed of men of the highest character, to acquire Texas on terms honorable to the United States and satisfactory to Mexico. The Senate then rejected the House joint resolutions and passed Colonel Benton's amendment. This measure was next introduced into the House, and Mr. Hamlin and all the anti-slavery Democrats except three or four, trusting in Mr. Polk's assurances, voted for the Senate amendment, which was carried by a majority of more than fifty. The parliamentary phase of these proceedings confused some good Free-Soilers of Maine, and they thought that men who supported the Senate amendment had withdrawn their opposition to the Texas grab scheme. There were also others who misunderstood the votes of anti-slavery members of the House in this latter incident. The following extract from a private letter which Mr. Hamlin wrote to a friend in Maine makes his position clear:—

“The resolutions were offered in the House for annexing Texas. They passed the House and went to the Senate. I voted against those resolutions in the House. They passed the Senate with an amendment prepared by Colonel Benton. The amendment left the manner and terms to be fixed by negotiation. By that course (I mean Colonel Benton's) we believed, if annexation took place, we could prevent a war and secure at least half of the territory as free. Well, the amendment of Colonel Benton's was carried in the Senate, and the resolutions so passed the Senate. The amendment only was sent to the

House, and I voted for it, as making the resolutions better. Bear in mind that the original resolutions were never sent back to the House. Nothing but the amendment came back there. That is the way of proceedings here. It is different in our state legislature. Hence, I did not vote for the original resolutions at any time."

But the country was to be deprived of the fruits of the patriotism and wisdom of the honorable members of Congress. Zealous to snatch the credit of annexing Texas for his administration, President Tyler's last important official act was to sign the Texas bill, and send a messenger off to Texas post haste with the legislative clause without the Senate's peace-bearing amendment, to announce to the impatient republic that it had been incorporated into the Union. It was the most perfidious act of a perfidious administration. Mr. Tyler usurped the rights of the incoming President, who in a few days was to take the oath of office. Senator Benton vehemently denounced this conduct of Tyler and Calhoun, and asserted that at least five Senators would have voted against the resolutions, had they known Mr. Tyler contemplated this act. Their votes would have blocked the annexation scheme of the slave power at that juncture, and possibly averted what John Tyler was justly responsible for,—the precipitation of a cruel and unjust war with Mexico. In the words of Senator Benton: "The flight of the winged messenger from this capital on the Sunday night before the 3d of March, dispatched by the then Secretary of State, in the expiring moment of his power, and bearing his fatal choice to the capital of Texas, was the direct cause of the war with Mexico. It broke up all the plans of peaceable men, slammed the door upon negotiations, put an end to all chance for accommodations, broke up the camp on the Sabine, sent the troops to Mexico, and lit up the war."

The danger of misunderstandings that every honest public man must meet was exemplified in Mr. Hamlin's experience in the Texas issue. His speech so incensed the slavery members of the House that they seriously considered the advisability of passing a vote of censure. At the same time there were anti-slavery Whigs in Maine who, not understanding the purport of the Benton amendment, failed to understand Mr. Hamlin's votes. Some historians, moreover, have failed to grasp the significance of the Benton amendment. Anti-slavery Democrats like Mr. Hamlin opposed the joint resolutions for fear that Texas would be annexed as a slave State, and also for fear that these resolutions would precipitate a war with Mexico. The adoption of the resolutions of annexation created a dangerous situation. The duty was devolved on the anti-slavery men of modifying the situation. They tried to do this by voting for the Benton amendment, which sought to accomplish annexation by negotiation, now that annexation had been decreed by an arbitrary slave power.

## CHAPTER XI

### MR. HAMLIN ON DUELING

NATIONAL feeling against the practice of dueling had been greatly intensified by the death of Jonathan Cilley in a meeting with William J. Graves, of Kentucky, on February 24, 1838, to which brief allusion has already been made. This was one of the least justifiable "affairs of honor" — if the word justifiable may be used — which ever occurred in this country. Mr. Cilley was a man of great courage and spirit. On entering Congress he encountered the fire-eating element, and when he heard their braggadocio and sneers at Yankees, he unfortunately allowed his temper to show itself. He returned Southern sneers at Northern men, and asserted that he would fight if challenged. From the day Mr. Cilley gave way to his anger he was a marked man. In a short time he made a speech in which he criticised an article that appeared in a newspaper, edited and published by General James Watson Webb, in the city of New York. General Webb was a duelist; he had fought the year before with Thomas F. Marshall, of Kentucky. Thinking that Mr. Cilley's remarks were intended as a reflection on him, General Webb sent Mr. Cilley a challenge through Mr. Graves. Mr. Cilley, however, disclaimed any intention of reflecting on General Webb, and declined to meet him. There the affair should have ended, but it did not; it was even currently reported that Graves consulted Henry Clay, Henry A. Wise, and other Southern duelists, who urged him to challenge Mr. Cilley. Mr. Hamlin, who knew much about the affair, openly charged Clay with being morally responsible for Jonathan Cilley's death. Graves made Webb's alleged grievances a personal affair, and Cilley, finding his courage questioned, and although unfamiliar with firearms, and near-sighted, designated hair-trigger rifles as the weapons.

The duel took place at Bladensburg, Md. Henry A. Wise was second for Graves, and George W. Jones, then a representative from Wisconsin, and afterwards a senator from Iowa, acted for Mr. Cilley. One shot was exchanged without effect, and then, according to the "code" as practiced by Southern experts, the affair should have stopped. Mr. Jones took that ground, but Cilley's murder was intended. Wise asserted that Graves's honor was not yet vindicated. A second shot was fired also without effect, and once more Mr. Jones



insisted that honor was satisfied and that the duel should end. Not so with Wise; he demanded that the unequal contest should go on. A third shot was fired, and Cilley fell, mortally wounded. This foul murder created a tremendous feeling against dueling at the North and in some parts of the South. Graves and Wise fell under the ban of public censure; the former was peremptorily retired from Congress by his constituents, and died from remorse. It was the fate of Wise to receive one of the most awful excoriations ever heaped in public on the head of a wrong-doer. A few years afterwards, when Thomas F. Marshall, of Kentucky, Wise, and their fellow conspirators had John Quincy Adams at bay, and were trying to prevent him from exercising the rights of a freeman in presenting a petition to the House, the grand old Puritan roused himself like a lion. Pointing his trembling finger at Wise, he uttered these words in his shrill voice with all the power he could command: "Four years ago there came into this House a man with his hands and face dripping with the blood of murder, and the blotches of which are yet hanging upon him." Before leaving the incident it should be added that Mr. Adams's denunciation of Wise caused him to be feared more than ever by the fire-eaters of the House, and yet respected by the best of Southern representatives. When another attempt was set on foot to expel Joshua R. Giddings for his anti-slavery sentiments, Tom Marshall was asked to lead. Marshall had some splendid qualities. "No," said he, with a look of disgust; "when I had the old lion, John Quincy Adams, at bay, and he turned on me, you people deserted me. Now, damn you, skin your own skunks."

The duel between Yancey and General Clingman was fought right after Yancey's speech. It was one of those curious meetings which were termed complimentary affairs, — that is to say, the participants would fire one shot without intending to hit each other, after which their seconds would go through the farce of declaring honor satisfied. Emotion having been relieved, reconciliation followed, and the great men basked in the sunshine of each other's praise of his courage and willingness to vindicate his honor. But there was some mystery about the duel between Yancey and General Clingman, and garbled reports were soon flying around Washington. Probably to clear the matter up, the "National Intelligencer," a Washington newspaper, was authorized to state that a duel had taken place, and that after one shot had been fired friends intervened, and a reconciliation effected. This duel revived in Mr. Hamlin's mind the circumstances of Mr. Cilley's death, and he saw that a fitting opportunity had come for him to try to induce the House to adopt more stringent measures against dueling. Mr. Hamlin never lacked the moral courage to do what he believed to be his duty. One of his first declarations of principle

was this : "I believe that nothing is ended until it is ended rightly." With this feeling he approached the Yancey-Clingman duel. For General Clingman, Mr. Hamlin always entertained a high personal regard ; for Yancey he had no regard whatever ; but the duel was in his mind a moral wrong, and he did not hesitate to pursue the course his conscience dictated, no matter what personal danger he might encounter.

Mr. Hamlin took action in the midst of the Texas debate when attacks on slavery had inflamed the extreme Southern members to a high degree against their Northern colleagues. The morning the "Intelligencer" published the news of the duel, January 16, 1845, Mr. Hamlin prepared a resolution, and asked Preston King to offer it. The reading of the resolution fell on the apologists of dueling like a clap of thunder from a clear sky. It called for the appointment of a committee to investigate the story in the "Intelligencer," with power to recommend the expulsion of Yancey and Clingman should it prove to be true. Now to reveal their real sentiments on the subject of dueling would place the upholders of the "code" under the ban of public opinion ; but if they should permit the passage of the resolutions they would accomplish the expulsion of two of their number : and Southern members who opposed dueling, and voted for the resolutions, would expose themselves to the danger of angering their colleagues, neighbors, and constituents. A serious dilemma was presented, but a way out of it was quickly perceived ; in fact, the first incidents of the debate proved that the leaders of the "code party" proposed to defeat the passage of the resolutions on a convenient pretext. Hence, the first thing to do was to find the pretext. After Mr. King had read the resolutions, William W. Payne, an excitable member from Alabama, sprung to his feet and objected to their reception. But that looked too much like intolerance, and the crafty Slidell tried to table them in the usual way. The House, however, believed that the resolutions should receive at least a semblance of fair play, and refused to accept Mr. Slidell's motion. An interesting debate then opened which shows how disingenuous fire-eaters could be even when professing high-sounding ideas of honor and chivalry.

Kenneth Rayner, of North Carolina, made one of the chief arguments against Mr. Hamlin's measure. He was thoroughly impregnated with the purely Southern view of slavery and dueling ; but he grew, and when the crisis came in 1861, the true Rayner revealed himself a man of great courage, high sense of duty, and pure patriotism. He attacked the anti-dueling resolutions largely for sentimental reasons, and although professing himself an opponent of dueling, yet took the apparently inconsistent ground that dueling was not an act of immorality which rendered a member an unfit associate

for the other members of the House. His view of this duel and the resolutions was that there might be extenuating circumstances, and in expelling those who took part in it the House might inflict a grievous wrong. "But," Mr. Rayner unhappily added, "I know how fruitless it is to appeal to the sensibilities and justice of the men who sit here with the halter of fanaticism about their heads. I, however, appeal to no feelings of humanity, but to the everlasting principles of justice."<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the typical fire-eater towards the resolutions was well illustrated in a speech by William W. Payne, the man who objected to the reception of the resolutions. His speech was long, rambling, coarse, and humorous in its inconsistency and naïveté. He asserted, for example, that the resolutions would accomplish nothing but a useless waste of time, and himself made the longest speech of the occasion. He declared that legislation on dueling could not check the evil, and then proposed a law. He betrayed a ludicrous ignorance of the rules of the House, by claiming that it had no right to act in the case brought before it, and insisted that there was no evidence before the House that a duel had been fought, ignoring the fact that the resolutions were introduced primarily to find out whether there had been a meeting between two of its members. The character of Mr. Payne's speech may be better judged from the following verbatim passages: "I have had a good deal of experience in the world for my age," said he, "and I tell you that every law passed for the suppression of dueling has only augmented the evil. If you really desire to apply the axe to the evil, you should pass a law disqualifying every one who fights a duel, if the distance at which he fights exceeds six feet. Pass such a law," Mr. Payne went on triumphantly, "and assume it to be dishonorable to fight at a greater distance, I can assure the House that there would be none, or very few duels — there would be none but which involved a man's reputation if he did not vindicate his honor." Dropping the rôle of the prophet, Mr. Payne proceeded to his peroration, and wound up in a blaze of pyrotechnic wrath. "What are we asked to do?" he demanded. "Why, suppose we should carry out the investigation and expel a member of this House for dueling, do you suppose that there is a single district in this Union which would not send back such an expelled member by an overwhelming majority. If I were one of the gentlemen rumor said were engaged in a duel, and if the House should expel me, I would scorn and spit upon your act, and come back with increased majority." As a final word, Mr. Payne expressed the hope that the resolution would not pass.

The most sarcastic effort came from Isaac E. Morse, of Louisiana,

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, January 16, 1845, pp. 144, 145.



whose masterpiece was the following resolution, which he offered as an amendment to the original measure : —

*“Resolved, That the said committee be authorized to inquire whether any of the members of this House have violated any of the laws of the decalogue, or of the Ten Commandments, within the District of Columbia, or any of the States ; and that they be authorized to send for persons and papers ; and if they shall find any of the members here guilty of a violation of any of these laws or Commandments, or having left this District with an intention of so violating them, that they be required to bring in a resolution to expel all such members.”*

When Mr. Hamlin arose to participate in the debate, there was great curiosity to hear what he would say, because he was known to be the sponsor of the resolutions, and also because he had proved himself to be one of the very best shots in Congress. A short time after Mr. Hamlin came to Washington, he accepted an invitation to join a party of congressmen in target shooting, which was a favorite pastime of the day. Long experience in hunting and target shooting at the musters in Maine had made Mr. Hamlin a crack marksman with the rifle. On this occasion he made the best record by hitting the bull's-eye three times in succession, at a distance of one hundred yards. This gave Mr. Hamlin a reputation as a great shot, which secured him against the danger of encountering the fate that befell his friend, Jonathan Cilley. There were several interruptions from members when Mr. Hamlin began his remarks, in answer to his arguments, but after he reached his proper theme the House paid him the unusual compliment of maintaining a perfect silence until he had completed his speech.

“Gentlemen have asked,” said Mr. Hamlin, “what is the object of this resolution. Its object and design are manifest, and I hope that it will receive the favorable action of this body. . . . I am in favor of the proposition. The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Rayner) asks by what authority we undertake to interfere in this affair, the duel. I answer upon the authority of the highest and most sacred law of the land — the Constitution of the nation. . . . The gentleman also asks by what authority we propose to proceed. Again I tell him that we plant ourselves on the Constitution as the platform and basis of our action. The Constitution says, ‘Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and with the concurrence of two thirds, expel a member.’ . . . The common law incident to the power we exercise under this clause of the Constitution overrides all mere rules. Are we to be told that should a member rise in his place and commit a cool, deliberate murder of an associate, we have no law to meet the exigency ?”

Mr. Payne : “That would be a violation of the privileges of the House.”

Mr. Hamlin : “Yes ; that would be a violation of the privileges of the

House, and more too. The decalogue mentioned in the amendment of the gentleman from Louisiana tells us that idolatry may be committed in the heart as plainly as in the overt act. Now, if I understand the provisions of the Constitution, we have the clear and undoubted right to exercise whatever powers might be in accordance with the rights of individual members, and which should comport with that breach of privilege which had been committed.

"Again, the gentleman from North Carolina remarked that before any member should be expelled from this House, he should be found guilty of some immoral act. Let me tell the gentleman from North Carolina, that there are men . . . in this Union who solemnly believe that when any man deliberately attempts to take the life of another there is immorality in his act."

Mr. Rayner: "I am as much opposed to dueling as the gentleman from Maine; but I said that dueling was not an act of immorality which would constitute a member an unfit associate for his brother representatives on this floor."

Mr. Hamlin: "I accept the gentleman's explanation. I had not heard the latter part of his remarks; but now that I understand him, I confess that it would take a nicer casuist than I to make a distinction between the language I attributed to the gentleman and the language which he now avows. I asked if there was no immorality in the act of dueling, and the gentleman himself admits the fact. I then asked if it was not an act of immorality which justified, nay, demanded the expulsion of any member who should deliberately commit it; but the gentleman, while admitting that dueling was immoral, remarked again that it was not of that degree of turpitude that would justify the expulsion of a member who should have been engaged in it. I hardly know what is the gentleman's notion of a moral course of conduct. He speaks of men here who, he says, stimulated by fanatics at home, might ask an investigation into this alleged duel. To whom does the gentleman refer? . . . I stand up for the North, and I say that this charge cannot be laid at our door.

"But, gentlemen, I speak with feeling on this subject. I remember, alas, too well when a favored son of the State I have the honor to represent, in part, was sent to his 'long and narrow home;' I remember that a wife and an infant child that had never gazed on its living father's face were left to mourn sadly over the fate of the man who should have been a husband and a father to them through weal and woe. I remember the excitement that pervaded my State, and I recall we were told that a man could not stand up here under the fire of reproaches unless he defied the laws of God and man and poured out the blood of humanity. It is the time, it is the hour, it is the day, for this republic to speak out against this inhuman practice in tones that shall thunder across its vast domain. It is time to set here an example of moral courage and rectitude. . . . Let us act as becomes us; let us act as it becomes the great institutions bequeathed us. Let us find out if there are moral influences here, and show that we are not representatives of fanatics."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, January 16, 1845, p. 146.

It was not to be expected that a House of Representatives under Southern influence would expel two Southern representatives for engaging in a practice sanctioned by Southern sentiment. Political considerations also influenced Northern members who were closely allied with their colleagues on the slavery issue. Obviously, it was impossible for this House to take an heroic course, whatever it pretended its sentiments were. The wonder is that the resolutions obtained as large a vote as they did. The record was 102 against 86. The individual record is not given in the official report of the debate, which is inadequate in all respects, often leaving the reader in doubt as to the meaning of the speakers. Mr. Hamlin won a moral victory in obtaining so large a vote for his resolutions; but it was useless for him to continue agitation on the subject, and with the announcement of the vote the Yancey-Clingman duel was dropped. But Mr. Hamlin's speech, although not intended as an oratorical effort, but as a manly protest against a barbarous practice, attracted a great deal of attention at the time throughout the country, and was one of the many things that established him firmly in the esteem of people who value public men for their strength of character, purity of principles, and genuine humanity, rather than for brilliancy of intellect and accomplishments of partisan leadership. Among Mr. Hamlin's associates who held the same views he did of moral questions, this arraignment of dueling strengthened him, and he was accepted as a coming leader of great measures.

Before dismissing this episode in Mr. Hamlin's life, it is interesting to recall the fact that when legislation failed to suppress dueling among congressmen, ridicule became an effective weapon against it and supplemented the moral argument. This was the natural course of events, for ridicule follows denunciation as a factor in a movement against an evil. About this time an incident occurred that was one of several which turned the laugh of the nation on "knights of chivalry," whose ideas of honor and courage were as absurd as their practices were unfair and dangerous. Joshua R. Giddings was challenged to fight a duel, and in accepting named raw cowhides as the weapons, and as conditions stipulated that he and his challenger should tie their left thumbs together and lash each other until one should die under the whip. Now, considering the fact that Mr. Giddings was not a practiced shot, while his challenger was an experienced marksman, Giddings's proposition was on the whole the fairer. For a duelist to ask a man unaccustomed to the use of a rifle or pistol to fight him was tantamount to asking him to stand up and be shot in order that the former might satisfy his ideas of honor and vindicate his courage. Giddings had the advantage of weight and height, but it does not follow that he would have had the greater



advantage in the end in a duel with cowhides, because his challenger was a slaveholder.

More incidents happened that placed Southern duelists in the position of would-be tragedians in burlesque. One affair of this sort nearly extinguished Roger A. Pryor in a gale of laughter which swept over the North. He "called out" John Fox Potter, a native of Maine and a representative from Wisconsin. Potter accepted the challenge, and with pretended savageness chose bowie knives as the weapons. This was the *reductio ad absurdum* of the code; but affairs had not progressed to that stage in 1845 when Mr. Hamlin attacked dueling, and his speech remains a part of the suasive movement to kill the barbaric custom.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PARTITION OF OREGON

THERE was a strange crossing of political interests and a singular reversal of fortunes when James K. Polk became President of the United States on March 4, 1845. Martin Van Buren made Mr. Polk speaker of the House in 1835, and John C. Calhoun, the bitter personal enemy of Jackson and Van Buren, made him President. Yet, Mr. Polk was also a protégé of Old Hickory; and as Clay was his opponent, Jackson roused himself in his last days to secure a final triumph over his rival. Jackson's friendship for Polk made him a "Young Hickory" in the eyes of his party, and the feeling for him that this created was no doubt a factor in electing him President. Mr. Polk's good fortune did not stop with the success of his campaign, for coming to the presidency in a period of great activity and development, he is remembered now as the Executive of one of the most important administrations in the history of the government. Mr. Polk was a pleasant man to meet; he was exceedingly courteous, of a rather grave demeanor and striking appearance, with his silver hair falling to his shoulders. One of the most industrious of presidents, Mr. Polk was nevertheless always accessible to members of Congress, and very patient. His private character was irreproachable, and his well-known piety won him the confidence of the conservative people of the country. He was not a great man; but while he was thoroughly subservient to the slave power, he was sincere in believing that slavery was a blessing, and honestly deprecated agitation of the subject. He was much the superior of Pierce or Buchanan, although he marred his administration by his complicity in the conspiracy to bring on the Mexican war.

The Twenty-ninth Congress was a more intellectual body than its predecessor. In the Senate the Whigs were strengthened by the return of Webster in full possession of his great powers; of John M. Clayton, an able and upright statesman of Delaware; of John Davis, one of the purest men Massachusetts ever sent to the Senate; and by the acquisition of Thomas Corwin, of Ohio, the most brilliant platform orator of his time; Reverdy Johnson, the distinguished jurist of Maryland. The Democrats, on the other hand, were reinforced by the return of John C. Calhoun in the zenith of his power and fame;

by the appearance of General Lewis Cass, who was to be the Democratic candidate for President four years later; by Simon Cameron, the shrewdest political manager of his day; and of Daniel S. Dickinson, an able pro-slavery man of New York, and John A. Dix.

The anti-slavery group in the House was increased by the appearance of several Northern men who achieved distinction, or made creditable records. One was David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, whose name is perpetuated in the famous anti-slavery proviso. He was of splendid physique, had sound common sense, coolness, and persistence. He quickly associated himself with Mr. Hamlin, Judge Brinkerhoff, Preston King, and their friends, and was a popular member of their circle. A prominent figure was Edward D. Baker, of Illinois, "The eloquent Baker," as he was affectionately called by his admirers. He was, indeed, one of the most brilliant champions of freedom the North produced in *ante-bellum* days, and fell at the head of his troops at Ball's Bluff. It is an interesting circumstance that Baker had obtained his nomination for Congress in a contest with Abraham Lincoln. A cool, well-balanced, and popular anti-slavery man who took his seat in this House was George Ashmun, of Massachusetts, who presided over the Republican National Convention of 1860. A newcomer from Vermont, who attained international distinction as a linguist, writer, and diplomat, was George P. Marsh. Another Vermont man of honorable record was Paul Dillingham, Jr., who served the Green Mountain State as its war governor, with credit to his State and himself. The new representatives from Maine were Cullen Sawtelle, J. F. Scammon, and Hezekiah Williams, friends of Mr. Hamlin, especially Mr. Sawtelle, who was long active among Mr. Hamlin's most trusted associates in his political career. Of historic interest was the entrance in this House of Allen G. Thurman, "The Old Roman of Ohio," with whom Mr. Hamlin formed a lifelong friendship, and with whom he retired from public life thirty-five years later.

The picturesque group of coming Confederate leaders, which was partially formed in the preceding House, was completed by the appearance of Jefferson Davis, Robert Toombs, and James A. Seddon. The future president of the Confederacy was tall, of commanding appearance, and of the manner of one born to lead. Able, forceful, scholarly, and courteous, Davis soon made himself felt, and was recognized as a coming aspirant for the robes of John C. Calhoun. In marked contrast to Mr. Davis was Alexander H. Stephens, the future vice-president of the Confederacy, small, emaciated, sprung from the people, self-educated, but able, resourceful, and adroit. "Bob" Toombs embodied the arrogant, truculent, and aggressive spirit of extreme Southern sentiment. His black hair stood up all over his head, and his eyes flashed when he was stirred. He was very effec-



tive in debate, and a daring leader ; yet his best qualities are forgotten, and although he denied the story, Toombs goes down in history as the man who made the foolish boast that he would call the roll of his slaves at the foot of Bunker Hill Monument. Mr. Hamlin affirmed the truth of the incident, but said that Toombs did not use the exact words attributed to him. Howell Cobb, who was forging to the front as a candidate for speaker in the next House, was, on the other hand, the personification of the *bonhomme*, generosity, and true courage of the South. There were few men who could not like Howell Cobb ; of all Southern men Mr. Hamlin knew in the House, he liked Howell Cobb best. Henry W. Hilliard, a new member from Alabama, who achieved some distinction under the Confederacy, and afterwards served the national government with credit as its minister to Brazil, was another Southern leader with whom Mr. Hamlin entertained pleasant relations.

The House was organized by the election of John W. Davis, of Indiana, as speaker. Mr. Hamlin's status among his party associates may be judged by the fact that he was appointed chairman of the Committee on Elections and a member of the Committee on Rules. After the House had perfected its organization, it plunged into the Oregon question, which would admit of no further delay. This marked the beginning of an open conflict between the champions of freedom and slavery, and American and British diplomacy, which now reads like a romance. If inheritance, discovery, exploration, and survey constitute a better claim to territory, rather than pretension based on false evidence and occupation under permission, then all of the land on the Pacific slope which was then called Oregon belonged to this nation. This embraced what is now included in the States of Oregon and Washington, and British Columbia, and Great Britain claimed it all except the lower part of the present State of Oregon, without the shadow of a legal title to it. The energy and patriotism of the Northern Democracy saved Washington and half of Oregon to this country ; the slave power betrayed the territory that is now British Columbia into the hands of the English government, and would have fastened its "peculiar institution" on Oregon had it not been defeated by the same men who rescued this territory from the other danger. Mr. Hamlin was on Oregon's side in her long struggle for her rights and liberty, and thus the story can be repeated because it has a personal interest in these pages.

The history of England's pretensions to Oregon brings out more clearly the duplicity of the slave power, because it indirectly and secretly supported claims that were at best but a tissue of ingenious versions of the exploits of English adventurers and explorers, and thus morally proves that the slave power opposed the reoccupation of

Oregon, because it was unwilling to risk a controversy with Great Britain which might prevent it from engaging the United States in a land-grabbing war with Mexico. Here are the facts.<sup>1</sup> Oregon was discovered and occupied by the Spanish. In consequence of a collision at Nootka Sound between Spanish and English sailors, Spain allowed Great Britain the rights of trade in Oregon, but yielded no rights of sovereignty in the territory. Charles James Fox, in a satirical speech in Parliament, demonstrated the substantial worth of the Nootka treaty when he asked what had England actually gained from the convention that she did not possess before. In 1819 the United States came into amicable possession of the Spanish lands in this country and also their titles. The year before, the United States and Great Britain had agreed on the forty-ninth parallel as their boundary line from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. As Spain then claimed some sovereignty in Oregon, our government and England agreed to leave the Oregon boundary line unfixed, and to occupy the territory jointly for ten years. The reservation was that the joint occupancy should not enter into the final settlement of the boundary line, and that it should be terminated only when one of the contracting parties gave twelve months' notice.

For this reason the question did not come up again until 1827-28. Now, for many years Great Britain had been carrying out her well-known land-seizing policy in Oregon, through the instrumentality of the Hudson Bay Fur Company. This company had pushed its way down through Oregon to the Columbia River, erecting forts and settlements which bore the British flag. When the boundary question arose in 1827-28, Great Britain, feeling secure in her position, since there were few American citizens in Oregon, and the attention of our government was given to more serious matters than the adjustment of a boundary line on an extreme western frontier, claimed territory in Oregon as far south as the Columbia River. The utter worthlessness of Great Britain's pretensions are easily recognized. One claim was based on the assertion that Vancouver discovered the Columbia River. The fact was, Vancouver himself, in an honorable statement, gave the credit of the discovery to Captain John Gray, of Boston, the first man to carry the American flag around the world. Another equally false pretension was that McKenzie had explored Oregon. The fact was, he did not cross the Rocky Mountains, whereas Lewis and Clarke surveyed Oregon under the direction of President Jefferson. A more preposterous claim to British sovereignty was that the Nootka convention gave the British govern-

<sup>1</sup> The chief authorities consulted are the speeches by John Quincy Adams and others in the House and the *History of Oregon and California* by Robert Greenhow (1845).

ment full right to Oregon. The fact was, a war occurred between England and Spain in 1796, shortly after the adoption of the Nootka convention, which circumstance, according to English precedents, destroyed the treaty. A final incident may be cited to show how weak England's title to what is now the State of Washington, and more than half of Oregon, was in her own eyes. In 1827 the life of the nation was still east of the Alleghany Mountains, and the government, not appreciating the value of Oregon, offered to compromise with Great Britain on the forty-ninth parallel; but the British government, realizing the value of delay, refused to accept this offer, in hope that it might ultimately acquire all the land north of the Columbia River. Yet, twenty years later, Great Britain yielded these claims, and accepted the forty-ninth parallel as the boundary line.

In 1835 the tide of emigration rolled into Oregon, and American citizens found themselves living in an American country under the jurisdiction of a foreign power. They began to petition Congress to fix a boundary line, and extend United States laws over them. The Democratic party responded to their petitions, and on this issue won the sympathies of the North. With the return of the Twenty-eighth Congress to Washington, after the triumphant election of Mr. Polk, the Northern leaders of the Democracy prepared to redeem the Democracy's pledges to Oregon, and planned to pass a resolution giving Great Britain the twelve months' notice to terminate the treaty of joint occupation of Oregon. Mr. Hamlin made an incisive speech, urging Congress to take immediate action, and there was an interesting debate that, however, is now important only as a prelude to a great contest which followed in the next Congress. No one can doubt the sincerity of the leaders of the Northern Democracy in insisting that their party should fulfill its pledges. Their anger, chagrin, and dismay may easily be imagined, therefore, when they detected signs that the Southern leaders of the Democracy intended to betray the party if they could. The fact transpired that the day the Democratic National Convention affirmed that our claim to all of Oregon up to  $54^{\circ} 40'$  was clear and unquestionable, Mr. Calhoun, as secretary of state, was secretly negotiating with Great Britain to compromise on the forty-ninth parallel. Taking their cue from Calhoun, the leaders of the slave power began to change base on the Oregon question. The resolutions to give Great Britain the treaty notice was not passed, and the Twenty-eighth Congress expired under these conditions.

This breach of faith aroused great indignation among the Northern Democrats, and the war feeling against Great Britain which arose grew out of their anger over their betrayal; and was an intimation to



the slave power that the Northern Democrats were fiercely in earnest over the Oregon question. The Twenty-ninth Congress convened under these circumstances, with a considerable war party in it led by General Cass. President Polk opened the question in his annual message, in which he reaffirmed our rights to Oregon in plain but dignified, courageous terms. The next crucial move was made by General Cass, who introduced in the Senate a resolution instructing the military and naval committees to investigate their departments and ascertain their condition. This was a significant expression of the war feeling of the hour. The debate that followed breathed war, and the Democratic press teemed with declarations of hostility to Great Britain. The natural consequence was that there was an outburst of ill-feeling in England. Lord Palmerston, the leader of the opposition, characterized the President's message as bluster, and Sir Robert Peel and other leaders in Parliament avowed Great Britain's determination to maintain her claims in Oregon. Thus a war scare arose, and the leaders of the slave party were quick to take advantage of the opportunity to array the conservative element of the country against a controversy with England, by emphasizing the horrors of war, although they had deliberately pursued a course towards Mexico that was destined to plunge the country into war with that nation. The Whigs embodied the conservative spirit of the country, and thus the slave party had respectable and powerful allies. But there was a large and strong party in Congress led by no less a man than John Quincy Adams, who favored giving the treaty notice to Great Britain, and did not believe that England would go to war over the Oregon question. Mr. Hamlin stood with Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams's position is the best authority the history of the times affords of the legality of our title to all of Oregon. Both as secretary of state and President, he had dealt with the Oregon boundary-line question, and urged our title up to  $54^{\circ} 40'$ . He was the best representative of his day of the educated conscience of the nation. He knew we were right in the Oregon controversy; his vast experience in diplomacy taught him the value of British bluster. Nominally a Whig, Mr. Adams broke away from his party on this occasion, and in a unique speech proved that the American title to  $54^{\circ} 40'$  was "clear and unquestionable." Mr. Adams's position is strengthened by the fact that it cost him an election to the United States Senate. The incident is, therefore, another measure of his devotion to principle and truth. His speech was most embarrassing to the slave party; but, having made up their minds to retreat from the declaration of the Baltimore convention, the leaders continued their tactics of opposition. A speech by R. Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, illustrated these tactics. Rhett was an adept in raising hair-splitting questions.

His speech was an ingenious tissue of quibbles, evasions, and insinuations. Evidently it was Rhett's purpose to embroil the Northern and Southern wings of the Democracy in a controversy in the hopes of weakening the former. But by an unlucky chance he indirectly insinuated that John Quincy Adams served only the interests of New England by charging him with opposing the war of 1812, and voting against the granting of supplies to our troops. The old Puritan completely exposed Rhett's malice, and floored him at one blow, by simply stating the fact that he was out of the country at the time as the United States minister to Russia.

When the debate was resumed, Rhett regained his courage, and renewed the charge against Mr. Adams. But the old lion was ready this time for the whole slave party. Mr. Adams was always at his best in debate when his temper was at white heat. Then he forged thunderbolts.<sup>1</sup> Rhett's attack induced Mr. Adams to explain his position in the war of 1812, and as he reached the climax, he declared impressively that he did not believe there would be war between Great Britain and the United States, even if our government should send troops to Oregon the day after the treaty notice was served on England. He followed up this assertion with a vehement and positive charge that he apprehended other circumstances would prevent a war, "the ultimate backing out of the present administration and its supporters from the ground they have taken." This was the first time the slave party in the House had been squarely told to its face what its opponents suspected of its purposes in the Oregon matter, and pandemonium reigned for a few moments.

Speeches that were made by other members of the slave party were more adroit than Rhett's, though aimed at the same object, and following the same lines, emphasizing the horrors of an armed conflict, as if one was certain to be provoked should the United States reoccupy Oregon. Yancey, of Alabama, spoke eloquently on the subject of war, and, in denying that the nation's honor demanded that it should insist on its rights in Oregon, alluded to honor as that "blood-stained god at whose red altar sit war and homicide," regardless of the fact that he himself had recently worshiped at that altar in an affair of honor. Toombs, of Georgia, made a speech in opposition to giving the treaty notice to England, basing his reasons on his alleged belief that the United States did not hold title to the limit the government claimed, in spite of the fact that all the best authorities in the country supported the claim, whether or not they were prepared to enforce it. Toombs followed up this line of argument with a crafty and plausible indorsement of a suggestion of Henry W. Hilliard, of Alabama, which had the merit of sincerity, that power be delegated to the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin's description.

President to settle the controversy with England by negotiation, a plan that would obviously suit the slave party's desire for delay. These tactics moved Mr. Hamlin to speak out his mind, and obtaining the floor after Toombs, he made a speech that was a calm survey of the situation in the House and the country and a patriotic appeal to the House to perform its duty. As an oratorical effort it was the best of Mr. Hamlin's early service in Congress, and discloses ideas of form and symmetry which are absent from the practical and plain style of address he finally chose in speaking before the people. Mr. Hamlin began his remarks by making a respectful recognition of John Quincy Adams's speech, and by corroborating the veteran's charge that the war-cry was raised to defeat the treaty notice resolutions. Mr. Hamlin said :—

"I come to the consideration of the question before us, I trust, with a full understanding of its momentous importance, and of the magnitude of the interests that are committed to our hands to be affected for weal or for woe by the right or wrong decision we make. The eyes of twenty millions of people are watching our action here, and the hearts of twenty millions of freemen are beating with anxiety as to the action we shall finally take. It has been well said by the venerable gentleman from Massachusetts (John Quincy Adams) that, for the years that are to come, there would not be a question submitted to the American Congress equal in its importance, equal in its moment.

"But proceeding directly to the subject, I design to refer, and in a few remarks to reply, to . . . gentlemen who have preceded me in this debate. . . . 'War,' 'war,' has been shouted within these walls and echoed over our vast country to react on this body. . . . I care not whether these shouts of war were manufactured here or elsewhere ; I shall not be diverted from my path of duty by that stale and senseless cry. I have heard it before, and upon this subject a year ago at the other end of the Capitol. When it was there, it was the same master spirit that raised this cry of 'war,' 'war,' to defeat this measure. Why is it gentlemen assume this position, a position which the facts do not justify? Rome had her Punic war ; it is reserved for us to have our panic war.

"Let us examine the position of the question before us. In 1818 a certain convention was entered into between the respective governments of the United States and Great Britain, relative to the territory upon our northwest coast known as the Oregon Territory. That treaty was by its own limitations to remain in force but ten years. In 1827 it was renewed by a treaty which was to be terminated whenever either of the two high contracting parties should give twelve months' notice of its desire to terminate it.

"And now, forsooth, because we come here in the way marked out by the treaty, to exercise the power thus especially provided for in the treaty, we are to be met as the war party. I repel the imputation, and I hurl it back again. It is that very cry in and of itself that tends more to produce



a war than any other course. Which course can be taken here? We on this side of the House are the peace party. Timid counsels tend to war; 'fear admitted to our councils betrays like treason.'

"I cannot sympathize, then, with gentlemen who use this argument, although they may use it honestly; nor will I permit it to divert this discussion, so far as I am concerned, from its true and legitimate track; we ask nothing on this side of the House but the exercise of our constitutional rights; rights that are pointed out and defined by this very treaty under which we are acting. And is it true that the exercise of these rights, as we propose it, is any cause of war, — No, sir. 'Old men see visions, and young men dream dreams,' the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Hunter) tells us, and, my word for it, it was but the dream of the gentleman's waking hours when he made the anti-war speech, — or calculated to be a war measure? While with gentlemen in all parts of the House I most cheerfully concur that peace is to be desired above everything else save the preservation of our national rights and our national honor, I do not hold war to be an evil from which we should shrink, when the preservation of our national rights and our national honor demand it. . . .

"There is another remark to which I must allude. Too often within these walls, in the discussion of various measures, I have heard taunts and reproaches, either directly or by implication, cast upon various sections of this Union; and when they have been directed to that section where it is my pleasure and pride to reside, I have felt a thrill along my nerves like an electric shock, and the impulses of my heart have been on my lips, to hurl them back again. But time and reflection have chastened my feelings, and I passed them by in sorrow that they should come from the lips of any individual on this floor; and while it is my glory and my pride to be an inhabitant of that section whose motives have been so often questioned here, I have a single word to say in behalf of that people. I have no objections to interpose here in defense of what may have been errors or the wickedness of her politicians; but in behalf of her citizens I have a word to say. I believe them to be as patriotic as any other class of citizens in our Union. They have exhibited their patriotism and their valor on many a well-fought field. Their bones have bleached on many a Northern hill, and the barren sands of the South have drunk their best blood.

"Sir, I point you with pride to the North, and invite you there to witness a system which has grown up with us, and which is our ornament. I point you to our system of free labor. I point you to our common schools, to our churches with their spires pointing toward heaven, and I glory in them. They are the monuments that belong to a people who have the true spirit of citizens of a free government. But I stop not there; I ask you to go with me throughout this broad nation. I point you to her — I point you to the whole Union — as a monument of political grandeur towering towards the heavens — upon which the friend of freedom, wherever upon our globe he may be, may gaze; around whose higher summit the sunlight of glory forever shines, and at whose base a free people repose, and I trust forever

will repose. So much for New England, my home. So much for the Union, my country. . . .

"If there is a single duty which arises over, above, and beyond all others, it is that of the American republic to afford protection to every American citizen wherever he may be found on American soil. It is one of the highest duties incident to the charge committed to their hands; wherever our nation's flag floats upon the breeze, it should be a certain index of ample protection to the American citizen in all his rights of person and property. Why is it true that in the nineteenth century, which we believe to be the best the world has ever seen, the cry, 'I am an American citizen,' shall not be as sure a safeguard and a pledge of protection as the cry, 'I am a Roman citizen,' was in the palmy days of Rome?

"It was said by an ancient philosopher that the government which feels most sensibly, and which redresses most promptly, every injury visited by a foreign power upon its most humble citizen has but only discharged the duties incumbent upon it. And is it not so? What in a greater degree than the strict discharge of its duty to its citizens will call forth their affections and their loyalty, and will draw them forth to protect the institutions and defend the standard of their common country in the hour of their common perils? . . .

"How then is our government to extend that protection and that aid which are required from it to its citizens — to those wanderers to the distant portion of its territory westward of the Rocky Mountains? Sir, those citizens have been wrested from American soil to be tried for alleged offenses by foreign law. They have been dragged from their peaceful homes — from their own domestic firesides — and have been tried and held amenable to the laws of the British provinces, and here in the nineteenth century, from this stale clamor of war ringing in our ears, are we to stop and fold our arms about us, and say, We will pause awhile before we give this notice — we may rouse the lion from his lair — England, with her chain of military posts around the world, may be aroused — and we do not precisely foresee what will be the consequences?

"No, the notice should be given now, and protection to American citizens should be extended wherever they are found on American soil. And then that flag that has been borne aloft in triumph in the battle and in the breeze, upon the ocean and upon the lakes, the emblem of protection to each and every one of our citizens, will float forever over the homes of a free and happy people. That flag which now

"So proudly drinks the morning light,  
O'er ocean wave, in foreign clime,  
A symbol of our might."

"This faithful discharge of governmental duties will be one of the strongest arguments in favor of the advancement of the principles of our own free government. The feeling of every citizen, that protection in person and property is secured to him by the laws and by the flag of his country, will serve more surely than aught else to extend and widen our

broad domain. Let it be done, and our government will pursue its onward course by its moral power, until it shall extend from the Isthmus of Darien to the frozen regions of the North — from the rough, rock-bound coast of the Atlantic, back to the gentle murmurs of the Pacific. Then, in the inimitable language of our own distinguished poet, —

“Wide shall our own free race increase,  
And wide extend the elastic chain  
That binds in everlasting peace  
State after State — a mighty train.”

“Oregon is ours, it belongs to us, and the question of title I have no disposition here to examine. It has been thoroughly and ably examined by those who are in authority, and the result has been presented to the American republic. I have no disposition to go into that examination. I should be well satisfied to rest myself on him who may well be considered the Achilles in this question in the position that our title was better than that of England. It was more, it was a perfect title. This being our territory, then by the laws and rules established by Great Britain herself, let us examine into its importance in a commercial point of view.

“We have been told, on another occasion, within these walls, that it was necessary to extend our public domain in the southwest, for the purpose of securing to our country a monopoly of the cotton-growing interest; and the argument was as broad as the Union; it came home to the feelings, to the interests, and to the principles of action of the representatives from every section of our country. Let us weigh by the same rules — the rules established on that occasion — the commercial considerations involved in this question. The Northern and Middle States are essentially manufacturing States, — the Northern States particularly; they are situated in a high latitude, under a forbidding climate, and yet they have the industry of their citizens, the water-power and the facilities given them by nature, to render them a manufacturing people. The South, the sunny South, may grow the staple product of the country, and the West may be the granary not only of our own country, but — give it an outlet — the granary of the world. Then I say, — in a commercial point of view, — this matter comes home to the feelings and interests of every citizen of every section of our widely extended country. The North must necessarily be the manufacturing section of the Union. Let them have an outlet; let there be an easy mode of transportation and communication to the far West, and we would become the manufacturers almost of the world. The Northern and Middle States must be that portion of the Union which will supply not only India, but China, and all the Eastern portions of the world, with their manufactured articles. But I do not stop here. The matter comes home equally to the interests of the South, because for the supply of those manufactured articles, the South would be called upon for their staple, for increased production of their staple, which in its manufactured form is thus destined to find its way to the markets of the East. It is a question in which the West has no right to assume a particular interest. It is a question that comes home equally



to the North, South, East, and West. It is a great national question, co-extensive with our Union. Why! we are already opening our markets in the East. We have already established our treaty stipulations with China. We have already sent our cotton and manufactured goods into the Eastern empire. Last year more than six millions of dollars of American manufactured goods were sent to the Eastern continent, and of that amount four million dollars is believed to have been of cotton goods. We have opened the Chinese market; and in opening that market, with the advance which commerce will give in that distant portion of the globe to civilization, to refinement, and to Christianity, we have opened a market which will call for untold millions of the manufactured articles of the Northern and Middle States — manufactured from the staple of the South.

“Besides, the commerce of the North is deeply interested in the whaling ships. The ocean is now covered with nearly seven hundred ships and half a hundred smaller vessels, manned by more than 20,000 of our citizens, who are sending homê as the fruits of their labor more than 3,000,000 gallons of oil annually. The trade between the United States and the East Indies is already very important. But it will be vastly increased when we shall find a route for that trade overland to the Pacific and across that ocean to India. Wherever the people of the East have become enlightened by commercial intercourse with us, she will consume a vast quantity of our products, while they will supply us liberally with theirs. Who can tell what uncounted millions of manufactured goods from the United States will be marketed in the East Indies? Commerce is therefore greatly interested in preserving the integrity of our domain. I would gladly pursue this subject farther, if time were allowed, and show that this question is one which concerns the commerce of the whole country, and that the whole people of the United States are interested in it. But I am limited in time, and cannot pursue the subject in all its details.

“I am in favor of giving this notice, as I have already declared. I am still in favor of giving it. For this course I will give reasons. First, I trusted that by giving the notice, the danger of delay and of obstruction in our councils would be obviated. The gentleman who immediately preceded me in the debate (Mr. Toombs) preferred the amendment of the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. Hilliard), which leaves it discretionary with the President to give notice at such time as he may see fit.

“This will lead to serious difficulties. I will say that this proposition came with no good design, so far as I can judge of it, though I have no doubt of the honorable motives of the gentleman who offered it. It will change the issue that ought to be made. Instead of inquiring whether we would act now, we would, by this course, give a discretionary power to the Executive to act or not, and either now or at a later period. Some would think that the President had acted too soon, if he acted now; others would think he had acted too late, if he postponed it. It would give an opportunity to many to shelter themselves from responsibility, and to reproach the President with having acted out of time.

“The true question is, whether we should give the notice now. Shall we

assume the responsibility of action or throw it on the President? That is an important question. Why should not we take upon ourselves the responsibility of action in the matter?

"Many gentlemen wished to shift the responsibility from themselves; and then, if the President should act promptly they would say that he had let slip the golden moment. Why, if the subject had been referred to us, and if the power belonged to us, should we not exercise the power and give the notice at once? If there was any advantage in giving the notice at all, it was proper to give it at the earliest moment, without loss of time. If we do not give it now, in what position shall we be left? The whole subject would be suffered to take its chance without an effort on our part to maintain our rights. I know that it has been recommended to us to adopt 'a wise and masterly inactivity'—that was to do nothing. I should rather call it masterly duplicity, or masterly dishonesty, to take measures in an indirect way, to get possession of the country without suffering our object to be known. How long do gentlemen wish to carry on this masterly duplicity? Some of them have fixed a limit to it of twenty years. Sir, I have a single idea on that point. We have told our people that they might occupy that country. Are they to be thus encouraged to go there and settle, and yet not be entitled to our protection? If you do not take them under your wing can you expect to retain their affection? No. They would be faithless to themselves if they gave you any confidence or affection after such treatment. As well might a mother expect the love of her children whom she repelled from her bosom, and cast out into the world without protection. It would be a most unnatural mother that would cast off her children, as we would do, were we not to give this notice. Should we acquire a colony by this course of masterly dishonesty, it would make us the reproach of all nations. There is one thing in the British government which I admire, much as I despise all the vanity about her power, and greatness, and glory. I admire it for one special quality—its care of its subjects. It gives protection to its subjects all over the world. Wherever the subject of England might be, he is covered with the protection of British laws and British power. This, in my opinion, is an example worthy of imitation.

"I will go a step farther than the notice, and extend the protection of our laws over our citizens in Oregon. If we do not we shall fall short of our duty. After doing this, I would go still farther, and create those bands of iron which will bind indissolubly together in our Union the people of the Atlantic and the people of the Pacific. I would go for a railroad across the Rocky Mountains—for annihilating time and space between us and the inhabitants of the Pacific coast. From a military point of view, this railroad would be necessary. We would be obliged, for the protection and defense of the country, to establish this mode of communication. While it would afford military protection for the defense of the country, it would be the means of creating a vast trade between the Eastern and Western portions of the continent. The immediate consequence of such a trade will be to open a traffic in our manufactures with the people of the East Indies; next, we shall be able to drive out all competition on the part of the British fabrics in that lucrative and important trade.

"We would by means of this overland communication soon be able to create immense commercial depots on the coast of the Pacific. We could make voyages to the East Indies in half the time that Great Britain could. Our manufactures would thus compete in that important and increasing market with those of Great Britain, and, indeed, drive out all competition, and thus they would become established on a firm foundation, without the aid of a black tariff to maintain them.

"I have always opposed internal improvements by the general government, but I would adopt this improvement as a military work — one necessary for the public defense, though it would be used for civil and commercial purposes. Should the United States delay to do their duty to their citizens in Oregon, the British government would avail itself of the delay to take measures for securing the territory to its subjects. Great Britain has already, by force and fraud, covered the world with more than a hundred colonies. She has done this by blood and carnage, and in violation of the rights of all nations with which she has been connected as an ally, or opposed to as a foe.

"The history of India will tell the whole story. In the year 1600, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a charter for commercial purposes was granted to some private trading adventures. This company have spread death and desolation over the East. Under Warren Hastings every crime, every species of perfidy and cruelty and rapine, was perpetrated for the acquisition of territory and of wealth by the company. So fearful and prodigious was his rapacity and cruelty that he became the theme of universal execration by orators and poets. It has been remarked in one of the invectives against him that when some wretch, laden with horrid crimes without a name, should stalk through earth, and we want curses for him —

"We'd torture thought to curse the wretch,  
And then to damm him most supreme  
We'd call him Hastings.'

"It would be easy to run a parallel between the East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company. It would show us the necessity of taking hold of this matter in due time, and of giving this notice now.

"Government after government has submitted to British power in the East, — some being reduced by fraud and treachery, and others by force, — until now the population brought under sway amounts to more than a hundred millions. I would be glad to trace the progress of this government in the East Indies; but not having time I would say, from beginning to end it is stamped with infamy. I call the attention of the committee to these facts, in order to show that, unless we give the notice, the Hudson Bay Company, which is formed upon principles akin to that in the East, will, by gradual encroachments, become possessed of all the strong positions in Oregon, and be more difficult to dislodge. We might find a parallel in their progress to the corporation that has so long oppressed and devastated the East. By what waters were the Hudson Bay Company originally bounded? By those waters that emptied into Hudson's Bay. But still




that company had by virtue of a connection with the Northwestern Company stretched across to the Pacific. It is the policy of Great Britain to plant and maintain colonies ; and one of the modes of doing it is to operate through chartered companies. This policy she is now applying to the Territory of Oregon ; and it will succeed there, as well as it has elsewhere, unless we interfere in behalf of our settlers to protect them, and give the notice of the termination of the joint convention.

"No longer ago than the year 1790, the British government claimed the right to make settlements on the Pacific coast, north of the Spanish settlements. Delay has taken place on the other side, and encroachments of Great Britain have not been observed. At length Great Britain has not only made settlements above the oldest Spanish settlements, but also far below them, and has now come down to the Columbia River. Originally her territorial pretensions were only to points beyond the oldest Spanish settlements, but soon she will come down to forty-seven. [A member here said, 'She is really there now.']

"Yes, sir ; she will soon be there, even if she is not there now. What, then, can be gained by delaying the notice, which is the only means by which we can arrest her progress ? While men talk of war, — which still only exists in the visions of old men, and the dreams of young ones, — while this bugbear is held up, we are losing the opportunity to secure for ourselves and our children an important and valuable country. What will arise is only an inference on the part of these gentlemen. They have not shown how it will arise. They have not shown us the *modus operandi*. But we well know that the British pretensions will be strengthened by eternal delay. The longer we delay the notice, the more arrogant will the British pretensions become. One point more. 'Our old men,' the gentleman from Virginia says, 'see visions, our young men dream dreams.' I am not old, and I can see visions ; and the dreams I leave to the gentleman from Virginia. Let those who dream, imagine that a war will arise from our assertion of our rights ; I do not believe it. But the vision I see is that of a populous and enterprising State on the Pacific slope, with manufactures, and commerce, and navigation. The waters rushing down to the Pacific will turn thousands of wheels and spindles.

"Our people will move to that region, and carry with them all their arts and skill, in all the various branches of manufactures which they have established in this region. In due time they will supply a large portion of America, as well as Asia, with their fabrics. It will not be long before our settlement will extend down to the Mexican boundary. I appeal to the gentlemen from the South to come to our rescue, and avail themselves of this fair opportunity to obtain Oregon. I ask your attention to the position we occupy before the American people and the world, in regard to this subject ; and assure you that for us there is no retreat from the responsibility of this act, without incurring the just reproach of the people of the United States, and, indeed, of the whole world. The Executive has presented his views to Congress, and has recommended to us the passage of the measure now before us. He has asked for our early action upon it.



The stale cry of war ought not to prevent us from discharging this duty, and if we should falter in performing it, we should be branded as unfaithful to our trust.

"The Executive has laid before us a statement of our just claims, showing that they have a solid and stable basis. The whole world will be convinced of their truth and justice; and can an American Congress be found slow to defend and assert them?"

"I would appeal again to the South, and to the spirit of their fathers, of Sumter, Marion, and Pinckney, and call upon them to come up to this duty of defending our soil. Should fear of consequences prevent us from vindicating our rights from foreign aggression? Should the horrors of war deter us from pursuing our line of duty? Will they not come up to the struggle, if need be, and like 'reapers descend to the harvest of death'?"

"True, the South has peculiar interests that would be hazarded in a war; but has not the whole Atlantic border a deep stake in the countenance of peace? We, sir, in the Northeast have an extensive commerce. Our ships are found in every sea, and we have cities on the seaboard exposed to the assaults of an enemy. But, sir, we are willing to hazard everything in the defense of our country, and to lay all our wealth as an offering on the altar of the public safety. But who can believe, sir, that England will go to war because we do an act that we are entitled to do by treaty stipulations? This is too absurd an idea to be for a moment entertained by any one.

"But there is another view of the subject. I do not pretend to be a wizard, nor to foretell future events, but coming events sometimes cast their shadows before them. Judging of the future by the past, I would say the moral force of our institutions would spread them over every portion of this continent. Their progress is as certain as destiny. I cannot be mistaken in the idea that our flag is destined to shed its lustre over every hill and plain on the Pacific slope, and on every stream that mingles with the Pacific. What would monarchical institutions do? what would tyrants do — in this age of improvement — this age of steam and electricity?"

"The still small voice in our legislative halls and seminaries of learning would soon be reëchoed in distant lands. Shall we fold our hands and refuse, under all these circumstances, to discharge our duty? No, let us march steadily up to this duty, and discharge it like men, —

"And the gun of our nation's natal day  
At the rise and set of the sun  
Shall boom from the far Northeast away  
To the vales of Oregon.  
And ships on the seashore luff and tack,  
And send the peal of triumph back.'"<sup>1</sup>

Our rights to Oregon were set forth so clearly before the House that even Whigs, who had opposed the issue in the Polk campaign as a catch-vote device, came to the support of the treaty notice resolu-

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, January 12, 1845-46, pp. 186-188.

tions, influenced, no doubt, by Mr. Adams's powerful and authoritative speech. The slave party practically abandoned the fight in the House, and yet Messrs. Yancey and Rhett, who had indorsed the Oregon declarations of the Democratic National Convention, continued to act in concert with Mr. Calhoun to the end, knowing that defeat awaited the resolutions in the Senate. But there were Southern Democrats who resented the attempt to betray their party. One was Jefferson Davis and another was Howell Cobb, who were conspicuous for their high sense of honor. Events had not yet come to pass that wrenched many a man from his anchorage. The support that Davis, Cobb, and their friends gave to the resolutions tends to heighten the duplicity of the slave party as exemplified in the course of Yancey and Rhett.

But if the weighty accusation made by Mr. Adams and supported by Mr. Hamlin and the action of members of the House in falsifying their positions are not conclusive evidence of the duplicity of the Calhoun party, its action in the Senate is final proof. Edward A. Hannegan, of Indiana, in a sharp retort to a Southern Democratic senator, told the truth about the slave party in these words: "If," said he, "Oregon were good enough for the production of sugar and cotton, it would not have encountered this opposition. Its possession would have been secured at once." The Senate defeated the blunt House resolutions by a vote of 32 to 22. An analysis of the vote shows that Mr. Calhoun drew away from the party, which had declared in its national convention that our claim in Oregon to  $54^{\circ} 40'$  was "clear and unquestionable," six Southern senators, who, with the Whigs, as the conservative element, accomplished the defeat of the measure. The reason given by these senators was the danger of war, and they were supported by Mr. Webster, although in his speech he neither denied nor affirmed the legality of our claim. If these defecting senators had stood by their party, the House resolutions would have passed the Senate, and all of Oregon would have been saved to the United States.

The refusal of the Senate to concur in the House resolutions provoked a storm of wrath in the Democratic party. A newspaper at Washington pointedly charged that secret caucuses were held by the Democratic and Whig senators, at the house of the British minister, for the purpose of arranging a compromise. The Senate appointed an investigating committee, which insisted that the editor should withdraw his charges under penalty of exclusion from the correspondents' galleries in both Houses of Congress. He refused, and submitted to the penalty rather than withdraw a charge that he believed to be true. But Mr. Calhoun and his supporters had won their point; they were soon able to wind up the Oregon affair and stop the administration



in its straightforward course. Resolutions couched in diplomatic language and conciliatory in tone, authorizing the President, "at his discretion," to give Great Britain notice, were adopted as a substitute, and passed by the House through the mediation of a conference committee. This was a defeat for the House, for it was an intimation to Great Britain that the Senate would not support the House in its desire to take Oregon without further negotiation. Still, it had the saving grace of "the glue of compromise" that the American people then loved so well. Trusting in the President's sincerity, most Northern Democrats in the House, Mr. Hamlin among them, accepted the substitute, as did John Quincy Adams also. The substitute was passed by a large majority, and Mr. Buchanan, who was secretary of state, negotiated a treaty with England, fixing the boundary line on the forty-ninth parallel.

The recession of the House was called a disgraceful surrender by the satirical Whigs. But what else could be done with the conservative Whigs and Calhoun Democrats in control of the Senate? This incident in our history has been generally treated from the Whig point of view, and the course pursued by the slave party only faintly indicated. Mr. Blaine may be quoted in illustration, on page 55 of his "Twenty Years of Congress:" "It is not improbable that if the Oregon question had been allowed to rest for the time under the provisions of the treaty of 1827, the whole country would ultimately have fallen into our hands and the American flag might be waving to-day over British Columbia." But how is that theory tenable when Great Britain began steadily to work her way down in Oregon towards the Columbia after the adoption of that treaty? In 1844, the Hudson Bay Fur Company had erected as many as thirty settlements or outposts across Oregon, which were practically garrisons, and claimed territory below the Columbia River or nearly to the northern line of California. Gold was discovered in California only four years after England had claimed the Oregon territory, and if the boundary line had not been settled in 1846, the cupidity of the English government would never have allowed it to give up without a contest a foot of land in Oregon, a country that might yield it a rich harvest in the precious metal. Thus, in view of the discovery of gold in California, it was fortunate, indeed, that the Democratic party had the heart to listen to the prayers of the American citizen in Oregon in 1844, since a postponement of the question would more certainly have brought on a war with England in 1849 than reoccupation of Oregon in 1845, when nothing was known about the existence of gold on the Pacific slope. The Northern Democracy saved Washington and Oregon to the nation, opened up commerce with the East, encouraged the building of the Pacific Railroad, and perhaps averted greater trouble than the country incurred in 1844-45.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MEXICAN WAR

THE war with Mexico broke out on April 14, 1846, the day our government backed down and withdrew its claim to all of Oregon. It was as if fate wished to emphasize the apparent victory of the slave power and the humiliation of the anti-slavery Democrats. As the annexation of Texas was the cause of the war, the events that followed the reception of Texas into the Union seemed to be a natural consequence. It is useless to speculate on the course pursued by the Polk administration. This may have been designed to precipitate the outbreak of hostilities, and it may have been shaped according to the necessities of the times. The progress of events, however, appeared to give the administration a plausible pretext for adopting vigorous measures that led to the conflict. Mexico had never acknowledged the independence of Texas, although several foreign powers and the United States had recognized the Lone Star State as an independent power. When the United States took Texas into the Union, it therefore assumed all of Texas' grievances against Mexico. One was a long standing quarrel over the boundary line between the two countries. Texas asserted that it was the Rio Grande, while Mexico maintained that it was the River Nueces. There were frequent collisions in the disputed territory, and when Texas became a member of the Union her government naturally called on the administration to maintain her position. President Polk sent some troops under the command of General Zachary Taylor into the country of the Rio Grande, and their presence there infuriated the Mexicans. General Ampudia ordered General Taylor out of the country, and an encounter occurred in which several American officers and soldiers were killed. The news created great excitement throughout the United States. The cry was raised, "American blood has been shed on American soil." President Polk sent a message to Congress, declaring the existence of a state of war, and urging prompt action. Congress passed a bill empowering the President to call for 50,000 volunteers, and appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry on the war.

The Mexican war threw an ominous light on the slave power, and also gave thinking men a clearer insight into the rôle, doctrines, and character of its leader,—John C. Calhoun. He was now at

the zenith of his power and fame. Few men have had a stronger moulding influence on this country than Calhoun. He had a great mind, an iron will, wonderful prescience, and a unique personality. His grim features, surmounted by stiff, bristling, gray hair, seemed to have been stamped by an iron process. His powers of logic and the purity of his private life were conceded by his opponents. But the one fact above all else in Calhoun's career that stands out clearly now is that he was the genius of the slave power. It is logical to conclude, therefore, that if the master mind of that party conceived plans, and intrusted them for execution to the organization itself, he was fully aware of the responsibility he assumed. When Mr. Calhoun stood up in the Senate, and proclaimed his opposition to having a war with Mexico, it was his intention to clear his skirts of a war and a land-grabbing conspiracy for which he more than any other man was responsible. He was simply stating the abstract proposition that he did not like war. No doubt Mr. Calhoun would have preferred to have Mexico of her own accord contribute a large slice of her domain to this country for the mere asking. No doubt it would have been more agreeable to confine the war within Texan territory; but it was not, because it was a land-grabbing conspiracy to perpetuate the organization Mr. Calhoun adroitly directed. Moreover, if he had desired to avoid a war with Mexico, and had wished to annex Texas by peaceful means, he would never have allowed President Tyler in the last hour of his administration to send the articles of annexation to Texas without the Senate's peace-bearing clause. It is absurd to suppose for a moment that when Mr. Calhoun started the events in progress that led to the Mexican war, his wonderful prescience could not foresee the result. He was not in the Cabinet when the actual fighting began, and could apparently disclaim responsibility for it.

Calhoun's complicity in the plot to betray Oregon was a natural and necessary sequence to the part he played in planning the Mexican war. In colloquial parlance, Mr. Calhoun "buncoed" the North in sacrificing its interests. He was the master of the Democratic convention that nominated Polk on the Texas and Oregon platform. He kept secret his negotiations for a compromise with England until Polk was elected on the Oregon issue. While Mr. Calhoun pleaded the dangers of a conflict with England in the Oregon controversy as a pretext for withdrawing our claims, he pursued the opposite tactics in the case of Texas, and urged annexation on the ground that England might take Texas. He artfully stimulated the war scare to which Mr. Hamlin made allusion in his speech on Texas, by publishing his correspondence with Mr. King, our minister to France. Senator Hannegan was right when he charged in the Senate



that if Oregon had been essential to the interests of the slave power, our claims to the entire territory would have been enforced.

But that for which history will most severely censure Calhoun is his authorship of the doctrine of state sovereignty, and the terrible results that sprung from it. To quote from an able and dispassionate critic of Calhoun, who, writing of his doctrine of nullification, said :<sup>1</sup> "It is not to be doubted that it sowed the seeds which in another generation produced the opinions that made the right of secession from the Union a firm political faith, which multitudes of men have sealed with their blood on the battlefields of a civil war."

The Mexican war also throws more light on Mr. Hamlin's Americanism and political principles. When the crisis came Mr. Hamlin deeply deplored the situation ; in fact, he never ceased to regret the necessity of meeting Mexico on the battlefield, and said so in a speech he made half a century afterwards before a Grand Army reunion in Portland, Maine. Favoring the abstract proposition of the annexation of Texas, because he honestly believed that Texas had never belonged to Mexico, he opposed annexation under the terms and conditions arranged by the slave power, because they were not honorable, and were likely to lead to war with Mexico. But the beginning of actual hostilities changed the situation ; an emergency was presented that required prompt action. Bitterly as he regretted the necessity of fighting Mexico, Mr. Hamlin felt with Decatur, when he said : "My country, right or wrong, always my country." He held that with the angered Mexicans preparing to shoot down American citizens, destroy property, and resist American laws in American territory, a congressman could no more properly refuse aid to the government than a physician could decline assistance to a man who had brought sickness on himself by some act of his own folly or wickedness. He voted for the war bill, and firmly supported the government. Only fourteen members of the House, the so-called fourteen immortals, and a few members of the Senate opposed the war. The Whigs, as a rule, sustained the government, because the nation's welfare demanded it. It was a trying position for Mr. Hamlin and congressmen who felt as he did, but they believed that they had a duty to perform, and however repugnant it was they discharged it.

While Mr. Hamlin upheld the administration in its general plan of war, he nevertheless had his ideas about the campaigns in Mexico and our military establishment, which he did not hesitate to urge on the government. An incident of this kind that is of importance to this record in its personal and political significance occurred in the winter of 1846-47. An anomalous condition of affairs existed. With a successful war going on the regular army fell off in numbers to

<sup>1</sup> George Ticknor Curtis in the *Life of Webster*, vol. i. p. 449.

10,000 men, and the administration could not recruit enough men to fill up the quota allowed by law, — 17,000 men. The reason was it was more popular to enlist in the volunteer branch of the service, which was winning the glory of the war. The government had more offers than it needed for the volunteer service, but more men were wanted in Mexico on account of the depletion of the regular army. Desiring to keep the standing army up to its complement, the administration determined to try once more to obtain the necessary enlistments. The Military Committee of the House prepared a bill to meet the wishes of the administration. This authorized the President to raise ten additional regiments, and as an inducement to enlist, men were to be allowed to choose their term of service — for five years or for the war — and were to have bounties. A feature of this measure that commended it to many congressmen who were looking for patronage to distribute among their constituents was a provision that the President should have the authority to name the commissioned officers to be appointed, — some four hundred in number.

This bill seemed assured of success. It had the support of the administration, it had been favorably reported by the Military Committee, and was drawn on the same lines as a bill which had passed the House at the preceding session. But Mr. Hamlin found the measure very objectionable, and decided to defeat it if he could. It contravened what he believed to be the correct principles of government, and also appeared to him to be unjust to the volunteer soldier. When the army bill came before the House on January 4, 1847, Mr. Hamlin led an attack on it which placed the measure in its right light before Congress as an un-American, un-Democratic bill, a usurpation of state rights. Hence, the situation presented to the interested House was a Jeffersonian Democrat arraigning a Calhoun administration for abusing a principle which it professed to uphold as its cardinal doctrine. Taking up the bill item by item, Mr. Hamlin clearly established all his points.

He argued first that the bill should be radically changed to enlist ten regiments in the volunteer service instead of in the regular army. One reason he gave was that the administration itself had informed Congress at its last session that an independent or volunteer corps was preferable to a regular army, and it was on that principle that Congress authorized the President to call for 50,000 volunteers. Another reason was that the volunteers had acquitted themselves with great credit, and no one had yet complained they had not realized all expectations. Still another reason was that there were grave doubts whether ten regiments could be raised for the regular army, since the Secretary of War reported that only 2500 men had enlisted since Congress had passed the other bill for that purpose.

Coming now to general principles, Mr. Hamlin discussed the abstract idea of maintaining a large standing army. A descendant of revolutionary stock and a sincere Jeffersonian Democrat, he was opposed to this. He favored a standing army only when an absolute necessity, as a nucleus for recruiting and drilling raw troops in an emergency. He believed that large standing armies were a menace to peace, an unnecessary source of expense, of intrigue and class distinction, and the natural props of monarchies. The essence of his views was that the citizens of a true republic will always volunteer to defend its welfare and honor. To increase the standing army with more volunteers ready to enter the service than were needed would be absolutely unnecessary.

In view of the development of the Calhoun doctrine of state sovereignty into the doctrine of nullification, and the method employed by both the North and the South in forming their armies during the civil war, Mr. Hamlin's ideas of how troops should be raised in the Mexican war are interesting. They illustrate in their turn his creed of government, that the United States was a government founded by the people, and derived its existence from their support; that it was not a compact or league of States, but that each State, while preserving the rights of autonomy, owed its allegiance to the general government; that the people were bound to come to the support of the government in times of war through their States, which should exercise their acknowledged functions in raising and equipping the troops. On this score, Mr. Hamlin severely criticised the war bill, because it infringed state rights by giving the President the appointment of the officers of the regiments called for. Mr. Hamlin's language makes his points clearer. He said:—

“I am now and always shall be in favor of restricting the executive patronage whenever it can be well done, and when there is no necessity for extending it. This I believe is the doctrine of the old Jeffersonians. It seems to me that there is no necessity for placing the appointments of four hundred officers in the hands of the Executive to be wielded for good or evil, as the case might be, though it be exercised with all the prudence the best man on earth could employ. . . . Who has complained of the officers of the brave volunteers? . . . They have always led their forces. . . . There are other considerations I would like to dwell on. One is that under this bill men raised in one State would be officered by men from another. Would it not be expedient for these corps to officer themselves? . . .

“The House may not recollect a bill introduced last session (by James A. Black, of South Carolina); but I do, for I had reason to confer with the gentleman who offered it. What was one of the grand features of that bill? It is one too often derided, too often laughed at. It is the great and



glorious doctrine of state rights, state pride, and state duty; and these doctrines are not to be forgotten in this connection. The gentleman proposed to organize the several corps of militia in the Union into corps to be denominated legions, each State to have its own legion and its own colors. Well, there was something in that suggestion. When called into active service, if there are substantial honors to be gained, laurels to be reaped, the pride of each State would be roused to gather its share. This would tend to preserve the principle of state rights. But it is a serious objection to the pending bill — and a serious one with myself — that by building up this large standing army there would be a constant and tremendous tendency to centralization. How different it would be with the independent corps — each impelled and directed to a common purpose, and yet meeting in different places of rendezvous, respecting their individual rights, and contending each for the glory of its own State.

“But how would it be with a standing army? Why, all individuality would be swallowed up, and all state lines obliterated. Now that fact alone is sufficient to lead me to prefer a modification or change of this bill so that it shall be made one by which men can be enlisted as volunteers. . . . Let us then avoid unnecessary extension of executive patronage; let us raise a volunteer corps; let us permit the corps to be officered by men of their own choice, and let the officers and the men be dismissed simultaneously. With these provisions attached, the bill will receive my hearty coöperation and support.”

Mr. Hamlin planned his attack on the army bill with the assistance of his friend, George Rathbun, who introduced a substitute for the original measure embracing Mr. Hamlin's ideas. This the House accepted, by a vote of 98 to 96, in preference to the bill offered by the Military Committee. The Senate concurring, the new troops were raised as volunteers, and commanded by officers commissioned by the States. The government has not since departed from these principles. It is an interesting fact, too, that the Union armies raised during the civil war were formed in about the same way Mr. Hamlin advocated in his speech on the army bill in 1846.

An incident happened during the Mexican war that Mr. Hamlin related with keen pleasure as an illustration of the kind of volunteer soldiers Maine produced. Major C. N. Bodfish, of Bath, a personal friend of Mr. Hamlin's, was one of the leading lumbermen of the State, and was noted for his practical ways in overcoming obstacles. The division he was attached to in the Mexican war came one day to a wide river, flowing between lofty and precipitous banks. The corps of trained civil engineers belonging to the division gave it as their opinion that they could not transport the army across the river in less than a week. When Major Bodfish heard this decision, he was disgusted, and, after making an examination of the river's banks, he asserted that he could transport the army inside of forty-eight hours.

Knowing Major Bodfish's reputation, the commanding officers ordered him to go to work on the problem upon which the engineers were figuring. He detailed a large body of men, working in relays, to dig a path, in a diagonal direction, down the bank on which the army was camped, to the river, which he bridged over with pontoons; and while the army was defiling down the first path and over the bridge, other men cut a diagonal path up the second bank. The army was transported within the time Major Bodfish stipulated, and the incident became famous. After the war had closed, Mr. Hamlin related the story to the President, who, at his request, appointed Bodfish collector of customs at Bath.

Mr. Hamlin continued to follow closely the details of the Mexican war. On one occasion he was brought in opposition to the dominant forces in the House, when he did not succeed in carrying his point. The incident evidences the petty and arrogant spirit of the slave party in small things. Daniel Putnam King was one of the fourteen Whigs who voted against the war bill in the House. For this reason the slave party in the House did not treat him at times with the courtesy his high character deserved. At this session of Congress, Mr. King presented a memorial from the Society of Friends of New England praying that measures might be adopted to put an end to the war. Mr. King moved that the memorial be referred to the proper committee and printed. A curious objection sprung up to this motion. One Southern member protested against the printing of the memorial because it was presented by Quakers, who were always in favor of peace; another, because it was a private affair, and would involve the spending of public money.

These and other petty subterfuges disgusted Mr. Hamlin, and he made a few remarks which expressed his ideas of toleration and courtesy towards an honorable opponent. He argued as Mr. King did, that the memorial should be printed, because it came from a respectable body of nine or ten thousand people living in New England. The paper was short and respectful, and by printing it the House neither indorsed nor contradicted its sentiments. "This memorial," Mr. Hamlin continued, "may deny the justice of the war, and yet I, who am one of the firmest and most decided supporters of the war, am disposed to print it. To refuse might look like shrinking from the freest investigation of the subject, and the fullest expression of public sentiment in regard to it. I am in no wise disposed to do either." But the House was in a particularly intolerant mood, and rejected Mr. King's resolution by a vote of 77 to 65.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Mexican war, in its political aspect, is a discreditable page in the history of our government, yet, as a feat of arms, it

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, December 29, 1846.

reflected credit on the military prowess of the young nation, and won it more respect among the nations of the Old World. The victories our arms gained at Vera Cruz, Buena Vista, Chapultepec, Churubusco, and other Mexican strongholds now read like romances. The Mexicans were brave, and greatly outnumbered our men; but they were inadequately equipped, badly officered, and divided by internal political dissensions. On the other hand, it is doubtful if there ever was a more efficient army for its numbers than the one that won the Mexican war. The men were mostly volunteers — the flower of American citizenship. They were young, unusually intelligent, brave unto rashness, and fired with ambition. They were commanded by Scott and Taylor, two of the best generals of their times, who had among their subordinates Grant, Sherman, Hancock, Hooker, Kearny, McClellan, Lee, Jackson, Johnston, Longstreet, and others whose names are now among the military geniuses of the age. In another respect, the Mexican war is of personal interest to these pages, since it gave Mr. Hamlin experience that enabled him to render practical aid to the Committee on the Conduct of the War when he was the war Vice-President.



## CHAPTER XIV

### DEFEATED FOR THE SENATE

MR. HAMLIN'S antagonism to slavery during his first three years' service in the House had a far-reaching effect in Maine, and the narrative now turns to the political situation in the Pine Tree State. When the slave power betrayed its plan to nationalize slavery by annexing Texas, the people of Maine, like those of other free States, were aroused from their passive attitude towards the peculiar institution. At first the slavery question was not a burning issue, but served in the beginning as an opening wedge in splitting the old parties asunder. The line of cleavage in the Democracy of Maine was indicated first by the development of two wings, one called the Free-Soilers, the other the Wild-Cats. As events progressed, the Free-Soilers were filled with foreboding over the increasing demands of the slave power and the attempts it made to suppress free speech, the persecution of anti-slavery people, the killing of Jonathan Cilley, and the red-handed murder of the Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, also a son of Maine. All these things, and others, revealed the temper of the slave power in its sinister light to the liberty-loving people of that State. Mr. Hamlin's continued fight against the slave party on the floor of the House, his denunciation of slavery, in Pinckney's words, as "an evil that blighted all it touched," his attacks on dueling, his resistance to the annexation of Texas as a slave State and to the betrayal of Oregon, — all these acts warmed the anti-slavery Democrats of Maine towards Mr. Hamlin, and although he was only thirty-six years old, they rallied around him in greater numbers than ever, and in the fall of 1845 brought him forward as their candidate for the United States Senate. Then followed one of the most exciting and interesting elections in the history of the State. It is of peculiar importance to this record, since it throws a strong light on Mr. Hamlin in one of the most trying struggles of his life, and also because it marks the beginning of the efforts of the slave power to dominate the Democratic party in Maine. Mr. Hamlin's success in his fight with the slave power at home was perhaps his best political work. His defeat in 1846 was a preparation for this long struggle. The contest he waged with the slave power this time lasted six weeks. The result

hung on the turn of a single vote.<sup>1</sup> If Mr. Hamlin had agreed to modify his opposition to slavery, he might have been elected. He refused.

But to understand this contest in all its phases, it is necessary first fully to understand the political status of the slavery question in Maine. When slavery began to force its way into politics as an issue, men began to array themselves on either side according to their convictions, interests, and natures. Although the senatorial election of 1846 was in the main a square fight between the anti-slavery and the pro-slavery factions of the Democracy of the Pine Tree State, yet it would not be right or just to rank all of Mr. Hamlin's opponents as pro-slavery men, as the term is now understood. There were many good men in the country at this time who, while personally abhorring slavery, nevertheless felt that it had a constitutional status which could not be assailed without assailing the Constitution itself. It is necessary to emphasize this fact, that the positions of many may be justly understood, who subsequently saw their error, and fought the upholders of slavery on the field of battle. George F. Shepley, for many years a distinguished judge of the United States Circuit Court, was one of the most conspicuous Democrats of this class who first fought Mr. Hamlin because they thought he was too radical on the slavery question, but afterwards joined hands with him in the real crisis. There were other conservative Democratic leaders in Maine at this time, such as Hugh J. Anderson, who was governor of the State, and as a strong party man accepted the policy of his party and opposed Mr. Hamlin. He was also ambitious to go to the Senate himself. Then there was a non-political element which instinctively arrayed itself against Mr. Hamlin because he was of a radical nature. The members of this feared a change, and they saw in Mr. Hamlin's aggressive leadership dangers that they thought the country could avoid by pinning its faith to the Constitution. Strange as it may seem, at this time slavery had supporters among the colleges and churches in Maine. Among these men were Rev. Dr. Leonard Woods, president of Bowdoin College from 1833 to 1866, and the Rev. John O. Fiske, of Bath.

But there was also an aggressive pro-slavery party in the Maine Democracy at this period, and it strengthened itself by drawing on the national administration for support. As the administration had

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin wrote Leander Valentine, of Westbrook, on March 2, 1848: "I was nominated some half a dozen times in the House, receiving about two thirds or three fourths of the whole party, perhaps the largest majority ever given in the popular branch in the legislature. Three times I came within one vote of a nomination in the Senate, once receiving just one half. But two or three Mormons (pro-slavery men) prevented me from getting that one vote necessary."

developed a distinctively pro-slavery policy under Secretary Calhoun, it is hardly necessary to add that it filled the offices with its friends. Of this party Nathan Clifford, afterwards United States attorney-general and associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was the most prominent leader. Mr. Clifford was a man of great industry and unbounded ambition. He had already served in the national House of Representatives, was a personal friend of President Polk, and desirous of promoting his fortunes. His ambition was soon gratified, and he was taken into Mr. Polk's Cabinet, where he exercised a considerable control over the federal patronage in Maine. There were other leaders in this faction, who, while they were of less repute than Judge Clifford, were none the less men of decided political ability. One was Wyman B. S. Moor, who was several times attorney-general of Maine, a member of the United States Senate for a short time, and afterwards United States consul-general to the British-American Provinces. Another was Bion Bradbury, of Eastport, a man of talent and address, who for many years was one of the most skillful managers of the Democratic party of Maine. A third was Shepard Cary, of Houlton, who served a term in the House and exerted considerable influence in his party. A fourth was Benjamin Wiggin, of Bangor, a smooth wire-puller; and a fifth was Leonard Jones, proprietor of the "Bangor Democrat," the leading party newspaper in Mr. Hamlin's congressional district.

In the beginning of the canvass Mr. Hamlin and his supporters had easily the best of it. They carried the majority of the caucuses in the summer of 1845, at which the Democratic candidates for the legislature were chosen, and nominated men who pledged themselves to vote for Mr. Hamlin when his name came before the legislature. The Democrats carried the State at the September election, and Mr. Hamlin's friends confidently counted on his elevation to the Senate. He probably would have been chosen had the legislature met shortly after the state election, but it did not convene until the spring of 1846, and in the interim the opposition relaxed no effort to turn every little advantage to account. Mr. Hamlin, on the other hand, was at this time in the thick of the fight at Washington against the plot to betray Oregon. He knew, of course, that in the beginning of his candidacy for the Senate his anti-slavery course would be used as an argument against him. Indeed, he was told by his enemies that they would defeat him if they could, because he was an anti-slavery man; he was also urged by well-meaning friends to modify his course. His most substantial reply to his enemies and timid counselors was his speech on the Oregon matter, and it is therefore to be considered in one sense as a measured expression of his anti-slavery convictions.

In spite of the fact that the party machine led by the governor was



against Mr. Hamlin, his friends were confident of his success, because the people of the State were for him, in preference to a pro-slavery man. As the time for the convening of the legislature drew near, Mr. Hamlin's opponents, both the avowed pro-slavery men and the conservative element, concentrated their forces in a movement to nominate Governor Anderson as the most available man they could present against Mr. Hamlin. Mr. Anderson was a popular man personally and a shrewd politician, but the fact that he was supported by men who believed in slavery, and were opposed to the principles of the Wilmot Proviso, was sufficient to defeat him. He was out of the race at the start, but certain unscrupulous pro-slavery members of the legislature, who did not propose to respect the will of the majority of their party, made use of Governor Anderson's name. When the legislature assembled in May, 1846, it was generally believed that Mr. Hamlin would be nominated by his party. He had a large majority assured him in the House, and while there were some doubts about the Senate, there was no question that he was the choice of the majority members of the legislature, and his party could be defeated only by unfair tactics.

There was only one way in which this could be done, and that was by bringing about a deadlock. Circumstances conspired to favor this plot. It was the custom then for each House to make its own nomination for senator in a separate caucus, instead of meeting in a joint assembly as they do now. Thus if the two Houses did not agree, a deadlock was sure to follow, when a small minority could dictate terms to the majority. If any man had predicted on the opening of the legislature that a plot of this kind had been planned, and that it would be carried out, he would have been laughed to scorn; nevertheless, a small number of bitter pro-slavery men who had been elected to the Senate were working desperately, when the legislature came together, to bring about a deadlock, and thus block Mr. Hamlin's election. They found that they could succeed only by breaking pledges made to their constituents to support Mr. Hamlin, and by resorting to questionable tactics. They were equal to this sort of work, and were therefore responsible for the success of the slave party in the Maine Senate election of 1846.

While the machine was working against Mr. Hamlin, he nevertheless had strong friends in the state government and the legislature, who had served their political novitiate, and who under ordinary conditions could have carried the day for him. Prominent among these men were Ezra B. French, secretary of state, and Alfred Reddington, adjutant-general. In the Senate were General John J. Perry, Alpheus S. Holden, Elisha M. Thurston, Asa Smith, Joseph S. Monroe, John H. Pillsbury, Charles G. Bellamy, Benjamin F. Mason, Randall Skil-

lin, Rufus Porter, Joseph Berry, Henry Barnes ; in the House were Hugh D. McClellan, Atwood Levensaler, Sylvanus T. Hinks, Horatio G. Russ, Hiram Ruggles, Thomas H. Norcross, Lyndon Oak, Benjamin B. Thomas, John Gardner, and the Rev. Ebenezer Knowlton, the Speaker. The testimony of Mr. Hamlin's friends in this contest is interesting, and no one is better qualified to speak than General Perry, an Oxford County man, a lifelong friend of Mr. Hamlin's, and whose personal character and services to the State as a legislator and congressman render him a reliable witness. General Perry read an address before the Maine Historical Society, at Portland, in which he said : "The defeat of Mr. Hamlin, by the legislature of 1846, was the result of one of the most corrupt bargains that ever disgraced any legislature." At another time, General Perry gave the details.<sup>1</sup> One point, however, must be explained before quoting him. The custom had not yet been established of holding a joint caucus in the legislature to make nominations for senator, but each house made its own nomination and balloted independently of the other. This circumstance gave Mr. Hamlin's enemies their first opportunity to make a stand against him in the Senate. Had the nomination been made by a joint caucus, Mr. Hamlin would have been chosen by a large majority. To quote General Perry :—

"A canvass of the Democratic members of the House soon settled the fact that Mr. Hamlin would be the nominee of that body, and his friends had the best of reasons for believing that he would be nominated in the Senate caucus also. But subsequently there appeared to be some uncertainty about the Senate ; it was developed that Mr. Hamlin had some bitter personal enemies in that branch of the legislature who would not hesitate to use any means within their power to defeat him. We found that they had been working day and night to accomplish this, and not meeting with the encouragement they had expected were at one time ready to abandon the fight. But they received reinforcements from a body of 'Wild-Cats' who came over to the Capitol, and it was announced that Mr. Hamlin would be defeated in the Senate caucus. The House had its caucus on May 28, and Mr. Hamlin was nominated by a handsome majority, receiving 44 votes to 29 for Governor Anderson and a few for other candidates. The result was announced to the Senate before it voted, but even in spite of this demonstration of Mr. Hamlin's popularity with his party, in spite of the fact that a majority of the Senate had been nominated under the supposition that they were Mr. Hamlin's friends, the Senate, after twelve ballots, nominated Governor Anderson, the pro-slavery candidate. He received 14 votes and Mr. Hamlin 11. On the last ballot, the supporters of the minor candidates combined on Mr. Anderson ; it was 'anything to beat Hamlin.'"

The next day the situation remained unchanged ; each house stuck

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the author.

to its candidate. A week was passed without an election, and then the news of the deadlock spread over the State. When it became evident that a plot had been formed by pro-slavery men in the Senate to defeat Mr. Hamlin on account of his anti-slavery record, the greatest indignation prevailed among the Free-Soil Democrats. They brought great pressure to bear upon several recalcitrant senators, but without avail. Charges of broken pledges and plain warnings that the delinquent would be punished by peremptory retirement from the Senate by their constituents had no effect. The slave power was in an ugly mood, and proposed to punish Mr. Hamlin for defying it. Compromising stories about corruption were next heard in explanation of the course several senators were pursuing, regardless of their instructions and the wishes of the people who had elected them, but nothing could be proved, and the long fight went on week after week, Mr. Hamlin's friends clinging to him with a pertinacity worthy of the cause, and the slave party in the Senate sticking to its candidate with a zeal worthy of a better cause. Again and again the slave party presented a new candidate, but at every House caucus Mr. Hamlin was put forward as the candidate of the Free-Soil Democrats of Maine. Mr. Hamlin's timid friends tried once more to urge him to listen to suggestions of compromise, but he firmly and emphatically refused to modify his opposition to slavery, or to entertain any offer of compromise from his enemies in the Senate. He continued his course in Congress, apparently undisturbed by the unexpected happenings at Augusta. When a change of one vote would have elected him at one time, if he had given assurance that he would be less pronounced in his attitude towards slavery, he remained as grimly opposed to the slave power as ever before.

The contest dragged on for six weeks without an election. Mr. Hamlin's friends were morally sure that corrupt means had been employed to block his election, and they hated to yield; but Mr. Hamlin, a few days before the time for adjournment arrived, decided not to prolong the contest further, because he did not wish the State to go unrepresented. He therefore wrote a letter to his friends advising them to withdraw his name in favor of James W. Bradbury, of Augusta, who professed to be friendly to Mr. Hamlin. They did it with great reluctance, and the legislature finally elected Mr. Bradbury, who held conservative views on the slavery question, and whose selection was therefore regarded as a drawn battle between the two wings of the Democratic party.

Immediately after the election of Mr. Bradbury had been declared, an episode occurred that General Perry relates as follows: "About a week before the legislature adjourned, Stephen H. Chase, of Fryeburg, who was president of the Senate, resigned the presidency, and



David Dunn, of Poland, was elected to fill the vacancy. Chase was bitterly opposed to Mr. Hamlin, and voted against him, although he came from Oxford County, Mr. Hamlin's old home, where three fourths of the Democrats wanted Mr. Hamlin elected. Dunn was supposed to be Mr. Hamlin's friend, until the final test came. This incident has never been explained, and is recited without comment. There were other senators also who betrayed the wishes of their constituents. Some of the senators who betrayed their constituency by opposing Mr. Hamlin were not met on their return home with 'shouts of applause and bands of music,' but were invited to political graves which know no resurrection. Chase,<sup>1</sup> for example, was retired from the Senate the next year before a withering fire of denunciation, while I, who was one of the other senators from Oxford County and Mr. Hamlin's friend, was unanimously renominated and reelected by an increased majority, — two convincing circumstances which show what the Democrats of Oxford County thought about the defeat of Mr. Hamlin. But I should add that the people of Maine took Mr. Hamlin into their own hands, and thereafter sent him to the United States Senate as long as he was willing to remain there."

If either Chase or Dunn had kept his pledges or respected the wishes of his party, obviously Mr. Hamlin would have been elected. This and other circumstances escaped the chroniclers of the times. The newspaper press was but an infant in those days. Years afterwards, when this defeat had lost its sting, and men who had opposed Mr. Hamlin had acknowledged their mistake and joined hands with him in fighting the enemy, an amusing circumstance came out in connection with the contest of 1846 that tended to place it in a somewhat humorous light. One vote in the Senate was diverted from Mr. Hamlin, not on account of his opposition to slavery, but on account of a personal grievance which one member held against him, but which, however serious to the senator, is an amusing illustration of how little things may control the course of events. "Misfortunes do not come singly." Mr. Hamlin happened to have an enemy in the Senate, whose hostility he had innocently incurred in an accident, the story of which, as related by him on the occasion of a legislative reunion at Augusta, nearly forty years afterwards, may be instructive to young politicians. As has been said, Mr. Hamlin in his early life was something of a "practical joker." He enjoyed a little harmless fun even at his own expense, but he did not dream one day, when an amusing idea popped into his head, that the execution of it would cost him an election to the United States Senate. While he was serving as speaker of the House some eight or ten years previous to this time, there was a

<sup>1</sup> Chase afterwards sought the Democratic nomination for Congress in his district. He was defeated by the anti-slavery men, and left the State.

member who prided himself on his faultless personal appearance. He was growing bald and was very sensitive about it. To conceal this approaching calamity, he was in the habit of using bandoline and other preparations to keep each hair in its proper place. One day, while sitting in the speaker's chair, Mr. Hamlin, who was in a particularly happy mood, happened to cast his eye on this man's carefully dressed hair, and not knowing his peculiarity—for he would not purposely have offended the old gentleman for the world—Mr. Hamlin beckoned to him, shaking with repressed laughter at the same time. Full of importance at being summoned by the Speaker to his chair in the presence of the House, this member marched pompously up to Mr. Hamlin, who smilingly whispered:—

“Old fellow, I just wanted to tell you that you had got one of your hairs crossed over the other.”

Had the Speaker suddenly slapped the representative in the face, he could not have angered the sensitive man more than he did by playing this little joke on him. His face turned red with fury, and he spluttered: “You insult me, sir; you insult me!” He marched to his desk in a state of great indignation. Mr. Hamlin was profuse in his apologies, but the irate man cherished the fancied insult for nearly ten years in the hopes of avenging himself. In 1846 the opportunity came. He was elected to the state Senate, where he joined the proslavery men, and with great satisfaction wiped out the insult to his hair. What aggravated the offense was the fact that he was elected to the Senate, pledged to vote for Mr. Hamlin. When the York County Democrats held their convention to nominate a candidate for the state Senate in the fall of 1845, the subject of Mr. Hamlin's innocent joke sought the honor. Learning of his candidacy and knowing that he still nursed some feelings of resentment towards Mr. Hamlin, the latter's friends suspected that he might prove an unsafe man to send to the state Senate. They were in control of the convention, and to guard against any misunderstanding as to his position, they called on him to state in the convention who was his choice for United States senator. He took the floor and declared that if Mr. Hamlin should be a candidate before the legislature, he would vote for him in accordance with the wishes of the convention. Rome was once saved from capture by the hiss of a goose. That was a narrow escape. In political annals it could be paralleled only by the escape of the slave power of Maine from defeat in 1846 by a hair. But this contest only nerved the Free-Soil Democrats of Maine to greater effort two years later, when their battle was renewed, and that time there was no slip between cup and lip.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE WILMOT PROVISIO

ONE of the most important measures connected with the cause of freedom in ante-bellum days was the Wilmot Proviso. In one respect this proviso operated like the gag-law ; although framed for a different purpose, it compelled the parties and public men of the day to divide in opposition to, or in support of, the slave power. Again, like the gag-law, the Wilmot Proviso became a tremendous weapon in the hands of the anti-slavery men in fighting their foe. Although they lost the preliminary battle, they won a greater victory in the end : the Wilmot Proviso aroused the free States and caused them, slowly at first, it is true, to join hands against the slave power. The Wilmot Proviso may be called the first plank of the young Republican party, which was gradually evolving from the free-soil elements that united in support of this measure. The Wilmot Proviso is of both historic and personal interest to these records, and the complete story of how this famous measure happened to be devised and presented is now related in its entirety for the first time, in order that all the chief actors in the drama may have their just share of credit. Although the proviso goes down in history bearing the name of its presenter, David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, yet, without desiring to detract from Mr. Wilmot's well earned reputation, it must be stated that the facts show that Jacob Brinkerhoff, of Ohio, is entitled to the credit for originally drafting the proviso, and that Hannibal Hamlin is also entitled to the distinction of bringing the measure to a final issue against the slave party in Congress.

The proviso was a moral result of the Mexican war. When it became evident that the Mexicans were willing to listen to negotiations for peace, President Polk asked Congress for an appropriation of \$2,000,000, to bring the war to an end, the understanding being that the United States should indemnify Mexico for land that the government should take. As the Mexican troops were occupying California and New Mexico, it was certain that this territory would be acquired, and the anti-slavery men were considering among themselves ways and means for preventing the slave power from using this territory for its purposes, when the so-called Two Million Dollar Bill was introduced in the House. The idea of excluding slavery



from the territory to be conquered and purchased from Mexico had occurred to many anti-slavery members of Congress. Mr. Hamlin, Judge Brinkerhoff, Mr. Wilmot, Preston King, George Rathbun, Martin Grover, of New York, Paul Dillingham, Jr., of Vermont, and others of the anti-slavery Democrats, had already discussed at their "messes," and in their conferences in the House, the possibilities of such a move by the slave power as was made in the presentation of the Two Million Dollar Bill, but no definite line of action was decided upon. When the bill was read, on August 8, 1846, the House was in committee. Brinkerhoff was quick to see that the time for action had come, and so were his friends, too. In the incident that then occurred, there were several men who took part, each of whom might have said afterwards that he had a narrow escape from lasting fame.

The Two Million Dollar Bill had been referred to a committee, and while it was considering the measure, Judge Brinkerhoff sat down at his desk, and, to use his own words in a letter to Henry Wilson, April 4, 1868, he "drew up the proviso in the exact language in which it now appears on page 1283 of the (congressional) 'Journal.'" The proviso embodied the language of the Ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slavery in the territory northwest of the Ohio, and followed it as exactly as Judge Brinkerhoff could recall it. Looking over the House, he saw Samuel F. Vinton, the leader of the Whigs, and an anti-slavery man. He showed the draft of the proviso to Vinton, who read it, and asked if the members on the Democratic side of the House would support it. Judge Brinkerhoff answered that some would. Mr. Vinton advised him to be on the alert, to get the floor and offer the proviso. Judge Brinkerhoff replied: "No, I am suspected, and the floor will probably not be awarded to me. Wilmot is the favorite of the Southern members, and he can get the floor when I cannot; and he is all right I know, for I have talked with him; he is the man."

Vinton promised Brinkerhoff that he would rally the Northern Whigs to the support of the proviso, and the latter turned in search of his Democratic friends. Just at this time Mr. Hamlin, John P. Hale, Preston King, George Rathbun, Martin Grover, Timothy Jenkins, Paul Dillingham, Jr., and others had formed a group, and were holding an excited conversation. As Mr. Brinkerhoff approached several members of the group, Mr. Hamlin, Mr. King, Mr. Grover, among them, passed him amendments to the bill similar in character to the proviso he had written, which shows that all these men had acted under the same impulses. He immediately read his proviso, and Mr. Hamlin said at once, "That's the best yet, because it's the shortest," and there were assents of "Yes, that's so." When Mr. Brinkerhoff added that he had asked Mr. Wilmot to introduce the

bill, since he was popular with the Southern members on account of his free-trade ideas, there was a chorus of approval. Further action was taken before the group dissolved, which shows the annoying difficulties the anti-slavery members of Congress had to cope with. Obviously to accomplish anything in the way of legislation, it was necessary for a member of the House to get the floor. As the House was controlled by the slave power, it was not easy for an anti-slavery member to obtain the Speaker's recognition, in a great emergency that involved the interest of the slave party. To meet any contingency of this kind that might arise from the presentation of the Two Million Dollar Bill, Mr. Hamlin and his friends agreed among themselves that they would all, ten or twelve in number, try to get the floor as soon as the bill was reported, with the understanding that if one other than Wilmot should succeed, he should yield to Wilmot. The wisdom in choosing Wilmot to present the proviso was vindicated. Out of the ten or a dozen anti-slavery men who sought the floor when the Two Million Dollar Bill was reported, Wilmot was recognized by the presiding officer of the House.

In well chosen words, Mr. Wilmot offered the proviso, which briefly declared it to be "an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from Mexico, that neither slavery or involuntary servitude should ever exist therein." The proviso was presented when the House was still sitting in the committee of the whole, and as the slave party was completely taken by surprise, it was passed by a vote of 83 to 64. Unfortunately, there is no individual record of the vote. When the proviso a few minutes later was brought before the House, after the committee of the whole had risen, once more the anti-slavery men triumphed, but by the close vote of 85 to 79. The slave party had made a desperate but unsuccessful rally. Some votes were changed, but each side rallied recruits and increased its vote. It was an ominous division; it was practically a solid free North, against a solid slave South. Only two Southern men voted for the proviso: Henry Grider and William P. Thomasson, of Kentucky, both of whom remained consistent opponents of slavery until the contest was ended by its downfall. Of the few Northern members who opposed the proviso, the strangest case was that of Samuel F. Vinton. He had pledged his support to Judge Brinkerhoff, and the records give no reason for his change of position. Yet it is only just to Mr. Vinton to add that he subsequently voted for the proviso when it was presented by Mr. Hamlin. The circumstance is alluded to only to give a clearer idea of the discouraging difficulties the anti-slavery men met, even in the ranks of their friends. Stephen A. Douglas, who was now currying the favor of the South, and his two henchmen, John A. McClernand, and Orlando B. Ficklin, also voted with their

Southern colleagues. The Two Million Dollar Bill, with the Wilmot Proviso attached, next went to the Senate, where John Davis, of Massachusetts, prevented action by holding the floor, by speaking against time, until the session expired. Mr. Davis's motives were misunderstood at the time. He felt certain that the Senate would defeat the proviso if it came to a vote, and he thought that if he prevented a vote the country would discuss the proviso during the interim, and create a sentiment in its favor Congress would not dare to resist.

Congress adjourned under these circumstances, and during the summer and fall of 1846 the Wilmot Proviso became the most widely discussed topic of the time. When Congress reconvened in December, the friends and supporters of the proviso had to shape their action according to the course pursued by the administration. Soon a bill was framed appropriating \$3,000,000 to end the war, and it was arranged to close all debate on this bill at the hour of noon on February 15, 1847. Wilmot was again selected to present the proviso, and on the day for action both sides prepared for a desperate struggle. The slave party, having had one unpleasant experience with the proviso, laid plans to defeat it that were worthy of Indian warfare. When the Three Million Dollar Bill was reported by the committee that had it in charge, the House was again sitting in the committee of the whole, and the slave party managed to keep the bill back until fifteen minutes of twelve o'clock with the intention of rushing it through the House while in committee, so that no opportunity could be given to present the proviso. Furthermore, steps were secretly taken to prevent Mr. Wilmot from being present in the House before noon.

It was a cunningly contrived plot, and the details and unfolding of the conspiracy demonstrate how desperate the slave party was. The anti-slavery men of the House, on the other hand, were as determined to win as their opponents, and had planned to meet certain contingencies, although they had not expected to encounter downright dishonorable tactics. At Mr. Hamlin's suggestion, they had substituted another proviso for the one drawn up by Judge Brinkerhoff, which read as follows: "There shall be neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude in any territory on the continent of America which shall hereafter be acquired by or annexed to the United States by virtue of this appropriation (the \$3,000,000), or in any other manner whatever, except for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted," etc. This substitute was thought more fully to embody the principles for which the anti-slavery men were contending than the original proviso which Judge Brinkerhoff had drawn up in a hurry. All the leaders among the supporters of the proviso took copies and prepared in other respects for the coming contest.



The moment the committee reported the Three Million Dollar Bill, Mr. Hamlin, Judge Brinkerhoff, and the other anti-slavery Democrats in the secret looked round for Wilmot. To their surprise he was nowhere to be seen. Another writer describes the scene : —

“ ‘ Now is the time ! Where is Wilmot ? Where is Wilmot ? ’ was anxiously whispered by one and another of the anti-slavery men. But to the question, ‘ Where is Wilmot ? ’ no man could give a response. The supreme moment had come, and the chief actor in what had long been anticipated as a great scene was not at his post.

“ ‘ Run into the cloak-rooms ! ’ cried Preston King. ‘ Search for him in the lobbies,’ said Rathbun.

“ But none of these suggestions resulted as was hoped — Wilmot was nowhere to be found. The anti-slavery men were in the direst confusion, Hannibal Hamlin alone being entirely calm and collected.”<sup>1</sup>

In the mean time the pro-slavery men, perceiving the confusion of their opponents, resorted to parliamentary tactics to prevent the offering of the Wilmot Proviso by any one. Dromgoole, the leader of the slavery forces, claimed that the time for debate had expired, and that the time for action had arrived. When the chair overruled him, he talked about raising the question of order on the Wilmot Proviso, and insisted that if overruled he should attempt to show that the proviso contemplated the exercise of a power not granted by the Constitution. “ The Wilmot Proviso,” said Mr. Dromgoole, “ is an arrogant assumption of power ; it represents a pernicious tendency, and is calculated to produce confusion and discord in the Democratic party.”

Preston King tried to offer the proviso, but a heated discussion arose which produced an uproar. The chairman had to suspend all proceedings several times until order could be restored. Mr. Hamlin and his friends in the mean time held a hurried conference, and the proviso was intrusted to Mr. Hamlin’s hands. Watching his opportunity, Mr. Hamlin, when there was a sudden subsidence of the confusion, quickly took the floor and moved the adoption of the proviso as an amendment to the Three Million Dollar Bill. Immediately Dromgoole raised a point of order, but Mr. Hamlin met that difficulty by promptly revising his motion on the lines Dromgoole claimed that it should be framed. John A. McClernand, who had continued his opposition to the proviso, came to Mr. Dromgoole’s aid with a flank movement. He insisted, possibly to gain time for the slave party, that he had been entitled to the floor, and when he was overruled, he took an appeal from the decision of the chair, which caused another uproar. When this subsided, Mr. Hamlin grimly insisted again that

<sup>1</sup> Carroll’s *Twelve Americans*.

the Wilmot Proviso should be accepted, and McClernand reluctantly yielded the floor to him. Mr. Hamlin read the measure as he had redrafted it. The fertile Dromgoole rose to a point of order, and claimed that Mr. Hamlin's amendment was out of order on the ground of irrelevancy, and when he was overruled once more, the pro-slavery men appealed from the decision, to be beaten. Until this time, Stephen A. Douglas had remained quiet, but now he emerged, and, true to his calculating nature and ideas of expediency, presented a compromise amendment which would bring the territory to be acquired into the Union under the conditions of the Missouri act of 1820. But the anti-slavery men were not deluded this time, and they voted the Douglas amendment down, and also another framed on about the same lines. And now Mr. Hamlin's amendment came to a vote. The tellers rapidly polled the House, and the anti-slavery men cheered with joy when the result was announced. The proviso was adopted by a vote of 110 to 89.

The next thing in order was for the committee to rise, and the House to reorganize itself to act upon the bill. Thus, the proviso was again voted upon, and was adopted by a vote of 115 to 106.

The following scene is described by another writer : —

"While the roll call was in progress, David Wilmot — stout and unwieldy of form, out of breath, and perspiring at every pore — rushed into the chamber.

" 'There he is, there he is, the —— traitor !' cried half a dozen of those who had been his warm friends. To them Mr. Hamlin said quietly : 'Don't be in a hurry, gentlemen ; don't condemn him without a hearing. Let us see how he votes.'

"At that moment the clerk called, 'Mr. Wilmot !' For an instant there was a hush in the House ; and then in a strong, firm voice, Wilmot voted 'aye !' Immediately afterwards a score of his old associates, Mr. Hamlin among the number, crowded about Mr. Wilmot in the cloak-room, and, with more or less excitement, demanded to know why he had not been in the House to present the proviso.

" 'Give me a moment to get my breath, gentlemen, — give me a moment to get my breath,' Mr. Wilmot replied, and then went on : —

" 'Just as I was coming to the House I received a note from President Polk, asking me to come to the White House immediately. On one pretext or another he kept me in conversation for a long time. I had no watch with me, and did not know how rapidly the moments flew. When I left the White House, however, I found to my consternation that I might not be in time to offer our measure ; then with all the rapidity I could, I hastened to the Capitol. The rest you know. This, my friends, I declare to you, upon my honor as a man,

is the whole truth.' Saying which Mr. Wilmot paused, and then added: 'But, by Heaven! I shall believe to my dying day that the President purposely detained me, with the expectation of defeating the proviso.'

"It is almost needless to say that Mr. Hamlin had never doubted Wilmot's integrity or his fidelity to the anti-slavery cause. He, together with Preston King, Rathbun, and the rest of their circle, offered Mr. Wilmot their warmest sympathy for the circumstances that prevented him from presenting the measure which bears his name, and so the matter ended."<sup>1</sup>

To this may be added that Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Wilmot remained close friends and associates. Mr. Wilmot was also one of the founders of the Republican party; he was temporary chairman of the convention that nominated Mr. Hamlin for Vice-President and for several years a member of the United States Senate when Mr. Hamlin presided over that body.

The proviso was rejected by the Senate. Public sentiment of the North was in favor of the measure; Daniel Webster lent it his powerful aid; but the administration had determined on the defeat of the proviso, and that most powerful engine of corruption — patronage — was the means employed. The Three Million Dollar Bill was passed in the Senate by almost a strict party vote, and sent back to the House for its concurrence. Here again evil forces triumphed, or else men were guilty of unpardonable inconsistency. On the last day of the session the courageous Wilmot and his determined allies made another stand in the last ditch, as it were, for the cause of freedom. Mr. Wilmot offered his proviso once more, and this time the House rejected it by the narrow vote of 107 to 97. Of the men who stood by the Wilmot Proviso it need only be said that they were the same upright friends of freedom who have been mentioned many times in these pages, and those who opposed had many among them who afterwards risked their all to disrupt the Union to perpetuate slavery. Honorable mention should be made of Alexander Ramsey and Samuel F. Vinton, who first opposed the proviso when it was presented in the House in August, 1846, but supported it when public sentiment was aroused. The change of a few votes accomplished the final defeat of the proviso in the House, and those votes, alas! came from the Northern men, — Joseph E. Edsall, of New Jersey; Henry D. Foster, William S. Garvin, and James Thompson, of Pennsylvania; Joseph Russell and Thomas M. Woodruff, of New York, and Thomas J. Henley, of Indiana. Thus, the Three Million Dollar Bill was passed by Congress without any restrictions whatever on the slave power. Thus, once again a slowly awakening people heard

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*, pp. 132-134.



in their slumbers a dim echo of the firebells that were warning those fully roused to the dangers which threatened the republic. The slave power was now conscious of its strength, and was beginning to boast of its future conquests. It was no child's play to battle with such a foe; not orators, not speeches, were needed to grapple with the enemy, but practical men, who could rise to any emergency at a moment's notice, combat carefully laid plans, watch the enemy in his ambuscade or meet him boldly in the open, fight treason in their own ranks, and keep up the courage of their friends. The future looked dark, but the pioneer anti-slavery men who rallied around the Wilmot Proviso had the stuff of the men of '76.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST OREGON

THE plot to betray Oregon to the British government was no sooner executed in part, as before stated, than another plan was set on foot, to establish slavery in Oregon. This developed when the settlement of the boundary controversy rendered it necessary to organize a territorial government. The leaders of the slave power exercised more caution and self-restraint in the first stages of this affair than in the latter; nevertheless, they took a bolder stand in enunciating and defending the doctrines of slavery extension than ever before. Their chief contentions were that the slave was "property," and that a slaveowner could, therefore, take his "property" or "chattel" wherever he liked; and also that Congress had no right to interfere with the institution of slavery. These claims had been heard before in connection with Texas and Missouri; but now they had a different sound when applied to Northern territory. There was an ominous meaning in these theories, and yet while the Northern anti-slavery leaders fully caught the significance of the slave party's attitude, the North was slow to believe. The general talk at the North was that this was more "Southern bluster." But it proved to be the beginning of a gigantic movement to force the peculiar institution into free soil, to make slavery national. The crisis of 1860 was the ultimate outcome of the train of events thus set in motion. The anti-slavery men in Congress were on their guard at the outset. Mr. Hamlin was one of their leaders in exposing and fighting this new move by the enemy.

The bill to organize Oregon as a free territory was introduced into the House on December 23, 1846, by Stephen A. Douglas. This bill reaffirmed the Ordinance of 1787, which excluded slavery from the Northwest, and the slavery leaders pretended to oppose the Douglas measure on the alleged ground that the ordinance was not constitutional. Their apparent object in pursuing this course was to lead the House into the labyrinth of a debate on the constitutional aspect of the Oregon case, in which they might be able to effect a compromise to their advantage over the territory to be acquired from Mexico. Stephen Adams, of Mississippi, gave a hint of this programme by introducing on January 12, 1847, an amendment that read, "Nothing in relation to slavery in this act shall be construed as an intention to

interfere with the provisions or spirit of the Missouri Compromise; but the same is hereby recognized as extending to all territory which may hereafter be acquired by the United States." The House was then in the committee of the whole, with Mr. Hamlin in the chair, but he took the floor to reply to Adams. Mr. Hopkins, who succeeded to the chair, ruled that so much of "Mr. Adams's amendment was out of order as referred to territory other than that of Oregon. Mr. Hamlin's short, vigorous speech was a notable warning, in view of subsequent events, to the slave power and a challenge to his enemies at home.

"I shall vote," said he, "under the belief that the Missouri Compromise has no more to do with the territory of Oregon than it has with the East Indies. Gentlemen ask me why put this restriction into the bill? I will tell them. If the restrictive clause were not inserted, slavery would creep into Oregon as surely as Satan crept into the Garden of Eden. . . . The Missouri Compromise did not apply to any territory in the Union at the time it was effected. . . . That compromise was effected by drawing a line along the latitude of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , separating so much of the territory of Louisiana as should be open to slavery from that part from which it was to be forever excluded. Now, it is obvious on every principle of justice that when other territory is to be taken into the Union, the compromise line must be run on a different parallel to suit the changed state of circumstances. I desired to have this principle of compromise introduced into Texas and made a condition of her annexation. But I was told by gentlemen who opposed me that this course would be unnecessary because a part of Texas must be free by the laws of Heaven, it not being adapted to a slave population; and finally, the compromise was refused, and slavery is now lawful in every part of Texas. But it is now time that it should be fully understood that the resolution has been taken, and will prevail in all the free States, that there shall be no more slave territory admitted to the Union. This doctrine will prevail, and woe! woe! unto the man coming here from any Northern State who shall not govern himself accordingly. Such a man may escape destruction for a short time; but as sure as he has an existence so surely will the resistless tide of public sentiment of the North roll over and overwhelm him forever."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Adams withdrew his amendment. The slave party returned to the attack with different tactics. Armistead Burt, of South Carolina, offered an amendment to the Douglas bill to extend the Missouri line of compromise to the Pacific slope, and he made a speech, prophesying disunion unless compromise was agreed to in the case of Oregon and the new territory to be taken from Mexico. R. Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, enunciated the extreme theory held by men of his class, that the ownership of Oregon resided in the sovereignty of the

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, January 12, 1847, p. 169. See correction, p. 177.



States, and that neither Congress, nor the entire federal government, had a right to legislate on the question of slavery touching Oregon.

The anti-slavery Democrats undoubtedly had a private understanding when the time arrived for action. Preston King introduced a bill that was more popular with them than that which Douglas had offered, since it was a reaffirmation of the Wilmot Proviso, and dealt with other subjects. It is evident, also, that Mr. Hamlin was chosen to champion King's bill, and to make reply to Rhett and his friends; but the Douglas bill had the floor the last day of the debate, and as it was a good measure the anti-slavery men supported it. Mr. Hamlin made the principal speech of the debate. This was delivered on January 16, 1847, and was one of the most elaborate efforts he ever made in Congress. It is an exposition of his constitutional knowledge and his views as a Jeffersonian Democrat and Free-Soiler of the powers of the government and the individual States in the matter of slavery. One sentiment that Mr. Hamlin uttered was heard throughout the country: "To any proposition for taking territory now free and sending there the shackles and manacles of slavery, I will never consent; never!" A necessarily compressed report of the speech is presented.

Mr. Hamlin began his speech by charging the pro-slavery party with misrepresenting the attitude of the anti-slavery party. If a stranger had listened to the discussion, he might have supposed that the anti-slavery members of the House were engaged in a crusade against the rights of the States. But they did not propose to disturb one solitary right; on the other hand, they pledged themselves to stand in a common brotherhood engaged in a common cause with the States.

"As members of this great confederacy, however, we do ask and demand that in all things submitted to our deliberation we shall have the right to speak, and speak with manly frankness and boldness, to maintain and defend the rights of constituents. We will ask no more, we will take no less. What is it, then, that we would propose to do? We propose to say . . . that we will stand by the clearly defined rights of each individual State in reference to the institution of slavery; but to territory now free it shall never be extended with our votes and consent, nor shall its limits in any way or manner be enlarged. . . . What provisions of the Constitution do we violate? What right of a single State do we disregard? . . . Now the question submitted to us, and it is not a question to be winked out of sight, is: Are we to acquire other and foreign territory . . . that it may be converted into slave territory? Never, sir; never, to the end of time, with my aid and my assistance, shall that acquisition take place. . . . We here understand perfectly if nothing be said, if nothing be done, that slavery will surely advance and invade the territories which we may hereafter acquire."

Mr. Hamlin reviewed the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida, and the annexation of Texas, to show the purpose of the people was to enlarge the Union, not to extend slavery. He referred to the Missouri Compromise, and while he was willing to agree to a fair compromise in the division of Texas at the time, now he would discard at once and forever any talk about compromises on any parallel of latitude named by man.

"To any proposition of taking territory now free, and sending there the shackles and manacles of slavery, I will never consent, never. . . . On that rock I build, sir, and the waves, the strength, the power, of that institution of slavery shall never prevail against it. Why should we say it now? Because if we do not say it now, it will be too late hereafter. Now is the golden moment. . . . I hope we may be able to pass a declaratory act forever prohibiting slavery in any territory we may hereafter acquire, and that, when admitted, the compact will be made to exclude slavery after it shall have become a State of this Union. I know that gentlemen may tell me that such an act may not have force or validity; that Congress has not the power to restrict slavery in any State. I have no fear on that subject. . . . Sir, the Supreme Court of the United States has affirmed this doctrine with reference to the Ordinance of 1787, that slavery was absolutely prohibited northwest of the Ohio River by that ordinance; and the Supreme Court has also decided that no State formed out of that territory has the right to establish slavery within its limits."

Mr. Hamlin affirmed the power of Congress to pass the declaratory act he advocated, and asserted that the people of the North desired it, although here and there there was

"a shackled press muttering its dissent" and "here and there a dough-face with feelers on his lips, uttering his faint protest against it. But it is the doctrine of the North, it is the doctrine she will march up to; she will live up to it in all coming time. . . . But the gentleman from South Carolina (Barnwell Rhett) denies to us the power of passing this declaratory act. If I understood the gentleman's argument — and I believe I did, although it is somewhat fine-spun and bordering too much on the transcendental — . . . the gentleman holds clearly and distinctly that we may acquire foreign territory, . . . but can do nothing with it. The answers to these propositions are full and to the point. They need only to be stated: —

"1st. If the general government have the power or sovereignty sufficient to acquire, they have the sovereignty to take care of, these territories.

"2d. If there is no sovereignty in the general government, and if it is with the people, we as representatives of that sovereignty can acquire territory by legislative enactment. We have done so. . . .

"3d. The gentleman holds that . . . the Constitution which authorizes us to pass all needful rules applies only to property. . . . Well, does he not hold that slaves are property?

"4th. California and other territory are now free. By the law of nations

the moment a slave treads their soil he becomes free. Slavery, then, must exist there in violation of that law."

Mr. Hamlin reviewed constitutional and congressional authorities to support his contention of the right to pass the declaratory act. He found authority in article four, section three, of the Constitution, which said :—

"Congress shall have the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States. . . . But it is too late even to raise this question when the whole and uniform action of the government has been one way. . . . Why, there has not been a time since the adoption of the Constitution, when Congress at each session has not exercised that power,—the power of legislating over territories. One thing more. I wish to see no cordon of free States thrown around the slave States. . . . I would leave a transit open through which they may pass into Mexico, where they may find a government in which they may participate. But I would leave this for those who are interested to do this without force or coercion. . . . God in his own good time will put an end to that institution, as He will as certain as time will roll on. . . . A few words more and I am done, and in reference to the stale, worn-out cry of the dissolution of this Union. . . . The Union cannot be dissolved. The mutual interests and benefits enjoyed by the different sections would not permit it. The great West is bound to the South by its commerce, and cannot be separated while its mighty waters roll on to the Gulf of Mexico. The North and the South, too, are equally bound by their commerce and exchange of products. These are all ligaments that cannot be rent or dissolved.

"The talk of it is folly, as well as madness. A dissolution of this great and mighty republic, erected by the wisdom of our fathers, and cemented by their blood. And for what! Spread it out that the public eye may gaze upon it; proclaim it that the public ears may hear it; utter it from the groaning press and thunder it from the pulpit. A dissolution of the Union because we will not extend the institution of negro slavery! The man who would utter that sentiment should blush when it falls from his lips. Dissolve this great and mighty republic for this miserable pretext! That is not the doctrine of the great and patriotic South;—she has rallied, except the time when she was about to go to the death for sugar,—she has rallied for this Union. She will stand by it when others desert it,—stand by it in all coming time, and will regret that her sons proclaimed it to the world, in this nineteenth century, in this freest country on earth, that we are to dissolve this fair fabric for the miserable reason that we will not extend the institution which is a curse to all States in which it exists.

"Whatever may be the action and course of Northern representatives here, the great mass of the Northern people have but one single impulse in their bosoms—to stand by this Union through good and evil report—to rally round the blessed stars and stripes of our glorious confederacy wherever they float—to peril their lives and pour out their blood and treasure,



if need be, in its defense ; but to the institution of slavery they say, 'Thus far hast thou gone — no farther shalt thou go.'"

A clearer insight into the plans of the slave power regarding Oregon may be gained from what John C. Calhoun said in the United States Senate, on February 19, 1847, a little more than a month after Mr. Hamlin's speech had defined the feelings and intentions of the anti-slavery party towards Oregon :—

"Sir, the day that balance between the two sections of the country, the slaveholding States and the non-slaveholding States, is destroyed is a day that will not be far removed from political revolution, anarchy, civil war, and widespread disaster. The balance of this system is in the slaveholding States. They are the conservative portion, — always have been the conservative portion — always will be the conservative portion, and with a due balance on their part may for generations to come uphold this glorious Union of ours. But if this scheme should be carried out, if we are to be reduced to a handful, if we are to become a mere ball to play the presidential game, — to count something in the Baltimore caucus, — if this is to be the result, woe, woe, I say, to this Union."

As the slave party saw that it was beaten in the House, it made no effort to defeat the Douglas bill, in the hope that the pro-slavery Senate would check the passage of the measure. This was the case. The Oregon bill was delayed in the committee until it was too late for the Senate to take action. Mr. Hamlin was, personally, greatly disappointed, for his efforts to guard Oregon against slavery were among the last services he rendered in the House. He left Washington at the expiration of his term, little dreaming that he would be sent to the Senate in a short year, in time to help Oregon secure her liberty.

The record of Mr. Hamlin's second term in the House may be closed with a brief reference to other acts of his that are of lesser interest and importance, which should not be entirely omitted. He voted for the Walker tariff bill, but in a speech on July 7, 1846, said that it did not fully meet his approval. On July 8, 1846, he spoke at length on the sale of public lands, defending the right of the government to sell to those who would settle on them and "transform a wilderness into cultivated fields and happy homesteads." This right was denied by some theorists. Mr. Hamlin laid special stress in his remarks on the necessity of the government taking pains to prevent the land to be sold from falling into the hands of speculators. He was also active at this time in pushing the independent treasury bill, though he had little to say about the measure in debate. It is noticeable that Mr. Hamlin several times, when postal bills were under discussion, advocated the repeal of the franking privilege. On different occasions he offered amendments to this effect, but without avail, —

April 24, 1846, February 24, 1847, and at other times. He opposed franking on principle, and to the end of his career in Congress urged its abolishment. One more incident may be referred to since it shows Mr. Hamlin's ideas about suffrage. A bill was before the House on May 21, 1846, to extend the right of suffrage to citizens living in the District of Columbia. Mr. Hamlin, in the discussion of suffrage, on this and other occasions, favored the measure and declared himself opposed to property qualifications. One argument he made was that if some people had no money they had rights that were infinitely above money. A unique incident was his introduction of a bill to close the "refectories in the basement of the Capitol, unless the keepers should suspend the sale of intoxicating liquors." This was offered on December 29, 1846. A motion to table was lost by a vote of 120 to 18.

A movement was started to elect Mr. Hamlin to the House for a third term. He wrote his friend, A. M. Robinson, who should have been his successor, and who was for many years a leading Democrat in Piscataquis County, that this was originated without his knowledge or desire. He did not allow his friends to proceed farther, and it appears that he supposed that he would not return to public life.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ELECTED TO THE SENATE

WHEN Mr. Hamlin came home from Washington in the summer of 1847, in describing his life in Congress to his friends, he said that he felt "cooped up" at the national capital, and he now proposed to "get back to nature." Out-of-door life was always his passion; farming and fishing his pastime. When he settled in Hampden he began planning to have a farm of his own, but it was not until he left Congress this summer that he was able to gratify his wishes. He bought a farm in Hampden then known as the Haskins place, on the eastern or river side of which is the site of fortifications that Captain Charles Morris, of the United States frigate *John Adams*, threw up in the war of 1812, when the British fleet came up the Penobscot River. Captain Morris was prepared to rake the fleet, but a fog arose, and in the end he had to burn the *Adams* and spike her guns to prevent the British from capturing a great prize. For many years subsequent the charred remains of the *Adams* were seen near the foot of the bluffs of the old Hamlin farm when the tide was low.

The land extended easterly from the village highway to the bluffs overlooking the Penobscot. It commanded a beautiful view of the river stretching to the right and left, and was refreshed by the breezes wafted up from the waters below. The farm comprised about fifteen acres of worn-out land; but the regeneration of land was one thing in which Mr. Hamlin especially delighted, and he set about his work with enjoyment. He had a little garden near his house, and he planned to make his farm and garden supply his table and live stock, and also leave a surplus for him to sell.<sup>1</sup> He worked on his land every day he could spare, and also insisted that his sons, and, later, his grandsons, should do likewise. He never said much about his reasons for this, but it was easy to see that he believed in the dignity of manual labor, and that it purified men to get back to nature. "God made the country, and man made the town," was one of his silent, guiding maxims of life. In a few summers' time he renovated the Haskins place, and thereafter it yielded him all the produce necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin kept a farm in Bangor and worked on it nearly every year from 1861 to 1890. He rarely failed to make it produce all he needed for his table and live stock, with a surplus that he sold.



A pretty reminiscence of Mr. Hamlin's life on the Hampden farm is associated with the bobolinks that nested in a large plot in the centre of a field. He had been too busy to pay attention to them until mowing in their neighborhood. He then noticed that the bobolinks flew up out of the tall grass in large numbers, uttering cries as they circled off, as if trying to draw him away. This Mr. Hamlin recognized as a sign that the birds had nests in the grass. He could not think of disturbing the pretty little songsters, and although they laid claim to a large plot of land, he mowed around the spot, leaving the bobolinks in undisturbed possession of their home. Before long Mr. Hamlin became very much attached to his bobolinks, and often in the early morning, when they sang their symphony, he would go to his farm and listen. "This is music," he would say. In haying time, whenever the farm hands approached the birds' homing place, they would see Mr. Hamlin turn around now and then and look at the plot in the centre of the field. So the bobolinks continue to nest and sing on the little farm in Hampden to this day, as they did more than half a century ago.

When Mr. Hamlin returned to Hampden from Washington he had little idea of reëntering active political life immediately, but circumstances conspired to bring him out of retirement before he had hardly entered it. A political tangle occurred in the Hampden legislative district. There were three tickets in the field and three successive failures to elect. Mr. Hamlin's friends urged him to take the Democratic nomination to prevent further factional troubles in his party. He did not desire to return to the legislature, and would have declined could he have seen his way out of the difficulty. But a final argument was brought to bear upon him, and that was, if he resumed his seat in the House, he could effectively fight the pro-slavery wing of his party, and perhaps materially improve his chances of going to the Senate. This prevailed, and Mr. Hamlin accepted the nomination. His election was by no means an assured success, nor was it a purely local affair. There were hard-headed pro-slavery Democrats in Hampden who honestly believed that the Constitution morally forbade criticism of slavery and with whom it was a toilsome task to labor. They liked Mr. Hamlin personally, but they felt it a solemn duty to offer him up as a sacrifice, and they were encouraged by the leaders of the pro-slavery Democracy.

But Mr. Hamlin was elected in spite of this opposition, and, as it afterwards turned out, his return to the legislature was an exceedingly fortunate thing for him. The anti-slavery men all over the State had bestirred themselves, and sent men to the legislature who could be depended upon. Among them was a group of men who were as true supporters as any anti-slavery leader in this country ever had. Mr.

Hamlin made their acquaintance, and for the rest of his fight against the slave power in Maine they stood by as his old guard. The ablest was William P. Haines, of Biddeford, who possibly might have sat in the Senate with Mr. Hamlin had he desired, as will appear in a subsequent chapter. Hugh D. McClellan, of Gorham, the Speaker of the House, was another leader. Leander Valentine, of Westbrook, was one of Mr. Hamlin's lifelong friends. Others were Ira T. Drew, of Waterboro, one of the leading lawyers of the State; Nathan White, of Bucksport; Horatio G. Russ, of Paris; Campbell Batchelder, of Corinna; Andrew D. Bean, of Brooks; David S. Flanders, of Monroe; Ozias Blanchard, of Blanchard; Samuel Mayall, of Gray; Benjamin B. Thomas, of Newburgh; and William R. Flint, of Somerset County. General John J. Perry, of Oxford County, and Charles Holden, of Portland, who had served before in the legislature, were members of this group of Mr. Hamlin's friends. Mr. Hamlin's brother, Elijah, was prominent among the anti-slavery Whigs of the House.

Mr. Hamlin's record of services in this legislature shows that he was closely attentive to his duties. While his record need not be detailed, several of his acts cannot be omitted. The most important was an attack he made on the doctrine of slavery extension. The Mexican war had not yet closed, and the question of the extension or restriction of slavery was slowly but surely bringing about a revolution in public sentiment at the North against slavery. Maine had not yet given an official expression of the feelings of her people on this question, although their general sentiment was strongly against the extension of the peculiar institution. Mr. Hamlin still felt that it was the duty of the North to maintain its constitutional obligations and confine slavery to the territory where it had previously been agreed by the founders of the government that it should exist. This was the opinion held by the coolest heads of the day, and it was vindicated in the end. In attempting to extend slavery, the South violated the implied moral obligations placed on it by the Constitution, and therefore was responsible for bringing on the crisis of 1860. But men were not prophets in 1847. The leaders of the anti-slavery party saw the necessity of maintaining their lines of defense intact. They knew how slow great movements were in crystallizing, and how important it was to move slowly until events began to operate. "The feeling in the air" was that this line of action would place upon the slave party the responsibility of any dire results that might follow its aggressive conduct.

Mr. Hamlin offered some resolutions in the legislature that clearly illustrate his feelings at this time. The first declared that, "Maine, by the action of her state government and representatives in Con-

gress, should abide honestly and cheerfully by the letter and spirit and concessions of the Constitution of the United States, *at the same time resisting firmly all demands for their enlargement or extension.*" The second said that, "The sentiment of this State is profound, sincere, and almost universal that the influence of slavery upon productive energy is like the blight of mildew; that it is a moral and social evil; that it does violence to the rights of man as a thinking, reasoning, and responsible being. Influenced by such considerations, this State will oppose the introduction of slavery into any territory which may be acquired as an indemnity for claims upon Mexico." The third asserted that, "In the acquisition of any free territory, whether by purchase or otherwise, we deem it to be the duty of the general government to extend over the same the Ordinance of 1787, with all its rights, privileges, conditions, and immunities."

When the committee having these resolutions in charge reported them, a member of the House who had a constitutional habit of disagreeing with everybody offered some substitutes, and in the course of his remarks criticised Mr. Hamlin's resolutions on the grounds that they were the same thing as the Wilmot Proviso, which he said was "nothing but an abstraction."

Mr. Hamlin replied to this astonishing doctrine with some sarcasm. He pointed out that the Wilmot Proviso embodied the principle of the Ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery in all territory northwest of the Ohio River, and was a fundamental law passed by Congress, and, therefore, not an abstract doctrine. Taking up the Wilmot Proviso he said:—

"Upon this question I chose my ground on the side of freedom—against the extension of the accursed system of slavery into territory now free. There I plant my feet with deliberation and with a fixed determination to abide. There I shall rest while reason controls the helm. The gentleman has said that the discussion in Congress upon the Wilmot Proviso was nothing but talk about abstractions. Indeed! it was proposed to pass a fundamental law prohibiting forever the introduction of slavery into territory now free, and which might be hereafter acquired,—to enact the principles of Jefferson, who originated the idea of the Ordinance of 1787, as applicable to the new States that might be embraced within the folds of this republic. And this to the gentleman's apprehension was an abstraction. Well, I would like to have him define what is not an abstraction. . . . Deprecating the system of slavery the friends of the Wilmot Proviso would provide against the extension of that system into free territory. In this the gentleman sees nothing but abstractions, but in his own propositions that condemn slavery as a moral and political evil, the further extension of which should be resisted by every just and honorable means, he avoided recommending any course of action. . . . But is it not a little singular that one who has said so much about the wrongs of slavery should



be so easily satisfied that he should fold his arms in a listless way, and say to our brethren of the South, 'Your institution is a vile one, its extension ought to be resisted, but we have no disposition to interfere to prevent its extension.' Oh, no! any effort of that kind would be an abstraction. For myself I care very little for that enthusiasm which wastes itself in words. I shall never be found pluming myself on my hatred of any particular form of error, and putting forth no hand to prevent its spread — hurling anathemas against the moral and political evils of slavery, yet not daring to maintain the right, but shrinking back before the menaces and frowns of the friends of the peculiar institution. I will not stultify myself by asserting a moral and political evil, and yet refuse to say that I will not prevent an extension. Withholding action is declaring that one will not say the truth about this thing of slavery, and we should act. . . . The first resolution is in accordance with the old Democratic doctrine of a strict construction of the Constitution. . . . The second resolution declares that Maine will resist the extension of slavery in free soil. The third makes out distinctly the manner in which it shall be accomplished. . . . We not only say that we will resist the extension of slavery into free territory, but we say precisely how we will do it. The substitute is vague and uncertain, and it might be explained away at the time of action. Upon questions like this there should be candor and frankness. We owe that to ourselves, to the State, and to the Union. . . . The only slave territories that have been joined to the original Union were received with their slaves, and the guarantees accorded to the old States were extended to them and kept in good faith. May we not require them in even-handed justice that free territories shall be added to the Union without change? And who and what kind of men at the North will demand anything else? I should, indeed, consider myself regardless of a becoming state pride, recreant to the impulses of humanity and to all the obligations resting upon me as a man, if I should falter on this question. I will not speak of the motives and actions of others; but occupying the stand I do, if I should fail to maintain the principles of the resolutions I should be entitled to the opprobrium of an outraged constituency, and to the scorn of every man worthy to breathe the free air of our native hills, or to drink the pure water of their crystal springs."

In another part of his speech Mr. Hamlin urged the adoption of his resolutions on the ground that it would also shape any further legislation Maine might make on this issue. But he particularly favored this act because he believed that it would have a moral effect. Years afterwards Mr. Hamlin was questioned about this, and he broke his habit of taciturnity about himself to say that he regarded the offering of these resolutions as one of the most important acts of his life. He did not make any explanation of this, but the events that follow seem to offer the explanation. The legislature passed the resolutions with only six dissenting votes out of one hundred and thirty in the House. Standing at the head of the column of States,

Maine's official and political acts have always carried weight. Mr. Hamlin's resolutions were looked on as the Pine Tree State's formulated views on the extension of slavery, and nine years later were practically the principles adopted by the young Republican party at its first presidential campaign.

The legislature adjourned in July to welcome President Polk, the first chief magistrate to visit Maine since Andrew Jackson. Mr. Polk was received at Augusta with many honors. William P. Haines made the speech of welcome, and he and Mr. Hamlin were the President's honorary escort in his departure from the city. Mr. Polk made a very favorable impression on the people of Maine. He was a speaker of no mean ability, and was an undoubtedly sincere Union man. Born and brought up at the South, he regarded slavery as a patriarchal institution, and earnestly desired that agitation against slavery should cease. His sentiments are to be found in his speech at Augusta on this occasion. His ideas of disunion, and the evils that would follow, may now be read with a clearer understanding of the man who uttered them than he received in his lifetime. Mr. Polk said in part :<sup>1</sup> —

“Sir, in other countries the monarch rules — he is the sovereign — but in this country, thank God, we know no monarch, no sovereign — save the people. . . . Sir, under our republican system we are all equals. It is the noblest structure of human government ever devised by the wisdom of man. This government, founded by our ancestors, is intrusted to our keeping, and we owe it to ourselves, to posterity, and to mankind to cherish and preserve it. . . . And permit me to add, that he who would upturn and destroy this fairest fabric of human wisdom would inflict an irreparable evil upon mankind.

“Sir, the government under which we live is one of compromise. Embracing interests so opposite, and comprehending within its limits so many degrees of latitude, with production so varied and pursuits so dissimilar, it could not well have been established upon any other basis than that of mutual concession. That band of statesmen, the noblest the sun ever shone upon, whose wisdom gave birth to our glorious Constitution, declared it to have been founded in compromise. The spirit of Washington presided in their counsels, and concession characterized their deliberations. They gave us their present institutions, and what do we witness as a result of their influence and operations? . . . a territory inhabited by a thriving, an industrious, a contented, happy, and free people. Who, then, I repeat, will have the boldness to strike a blow at this fair framework? . . . It is, therefore, to a Union of the States, sir, that we must look as the pole-star to guide us onward in the career of prosperity and greatness. . . . Sir, let that Union be dissolved, and these States pass into petty prin-

<sup>1</sup> Reported in the *Augusta Tri-Weekly*, July, 1847.

cialties, with jarring interests, and incessantly at war with each other, and the last hope in the capacity of man for self-government is fled forever. Our example is now spread abroad to the world — the result of our experiment is watched with intense interest. . . . Sir, how shall the local jealousies which disturb us compare with the great object of binding and continuing this free and happy people? . . . Why, then, should the thought be entertained that this Union should be dissolved into its original elements? Let us rally round the Union as our safeguard. At that altar, thank God, we may all worship, and in pleading for the preservation of our institutions, pray for the advancement of the good of mankind." . . .

In December, 1847, news came from Washington that Senator Fairfield had unexpectedly succumbed to a surgical operation. The tidings of his sudden death caused great sorrow in Maine, for it was generally believed that he was a man of national possibilities. The immediate result of Fairfield's untimely end was the reopening of the old fight between the anti-slavery and pro-slavery wings of the Maine Democracy to nominate a man to fill out Fairfield's unexpired term of three years. Mr. Hamlin's defeat in 1846 served to strengthen him with the anti-slavery wing of his party, and they brought him forward again as their candidate. The pro-slavery men again opposed him for the same reasons as in 1846, and even more vehemently on account of his course in the preceding legislature. For the following six months a warmly contested canvass was carried on among the members elect of the legislature, and the bitter cry was heard again: "Anything to beat Hamlin."<sup>1</sup>

For a second time Mr. Hamlin had to fight the party machine, and the opposition to him was more formidable than in his first campaign, although it was not as cunningly managed. There were four candidates against him this time, and it was thought by his opponents that this would draw strength away from him. The candidates represented different shades of opinions and convictions on the slavery question — from the hard-headed Hunker Democrat to the artful dodger who sheltered himself behind the Constitution, while trying to ascertain which way the wind was blowing. The best known was Nathan Clifford, who, as a member of the Cabinet, had the moral if not the practical support of the administration. Mr. Polk's courtesy and sense of propriety precluded him from interfering in behalf of his friend, Mr. Clifford, nevertheless the government officeholders in Maine were in sympathy with the administration, and constituted a strong Clifford machine. Ex-Governor Anderson was also a candidate, and still retained a large personal following. The

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin wrote Leander Valentine, on March 2, 1848: "I am to be hunted down with the ferocity of bloodhounds."



third was Samuel Wells, a man of force, who became governor of the State a few years afterwards. A fourth candidate was John D. McCrate, a member of Congress, who was friendly to Mr. Hamlin.

John W. Dana was governor, and he had been elected as an anti-slavery man. In his message to the legislature of 1847, Mr. Dana took strong grounds against the doctrine of slavery extension, and for this he was commended by Mr. Hamlin in his speech on the Wilmot Proviso, which is partially reproduced in preceding pages. But while Mr. Dana was naturally inclined against the institution of slavery, he was a type of the well-meaning men of his day who allowed themselves to be guided in their difficulties by the fetich of party fealty. Men of this kind preached party duty first, and that a Democrat should "vote for the devil, if the regular party nominee." The emancipation of the American voter from this fetich is a story by itself. It will suffice now to say that the events that led to the crisis of 1860 found Mr. Dana a convert to slavery, because it was supported by a majority of his party. His change of position was indicated at this time by his appointment of Wyman B. S. Moor to fill Fairfield's seat until the legislature acted. This was a distinct triumph for the avowed pro-slavery element of the Democratic party. Moor was a leader of that faction, and had publicly announced his opposition to the Wilmot Proviso.

With the pro-slavery element in control of the party machinery, and two of its men in the United States Senate, the outlook was not encouraging for Mr. Hamlin at first. But appearances were deceitful; the appointment of Moor caused an awakening of anti-slavery sentiment throughout Maine. It forced a direct issue between principles rather than men, and caused the defeat of the pro-slavery men. They contested every inch of the ground from the beginning of the fight. An idea of the extreme lengths to which they went in their efforts to defeat Mr. Hamlin may be gathered from the position Senator Bradbury took. When he was elected to the Senate in 1846, he took a conservative attitude towards the slavery question, and his election was regarded as a draw between the two factions. Mr. Hamlin threw his strength to Mr. Bradbury in the belief that it would be better to send him to the Senate than an avowed pro-slavery man. Mr. Bradbury acknowledged his obligations to Mr. Hamlin, and professed his intention of standing by him in the future. But he was a man of a gentle nature and conservative disposition; the internal wranglings of his party disturbed him.

But Mr. Hamlin had active and reliable friends. Ezra B. French was still secretary of state; Alfred Reddington, adjutant-general, and Samuel Cony, who was afterwards governor of Maine, was then the land agent. Mr. Hamlin's friends in the Senate were Thomas Dyer,

3d, Ira T. Drew, Samuel W. Fox, Samuel Mayhall, Charles Holden, Hiram Chapman, Adams Treat, Benjamin B. Thomas, Henry Richardson, Gilman M. Burleigh, William R. Flint, Jacob Hale, and William Tripp. In the House were Hugh D. McClellan, the Speaker, George M. Freeman, Leander Valentine, Nathan White, Ziba Thayer, John Thissell, Stephen D. Jennings, James Patten, Jr., John Tobin, George P. Sewall, William Merriam, Ebenezer Knowlton, Willard P. Harriman, and others who were prominent in the political affairs of their day. They were not only good anti-slavery men, but they were also practical, and experienced in the ways of politicians. They profited by the lesson of the previous senatorial election, and won their victory when perhaps one false move might have defeated them.

When the legislature convened, the pro-slavery men were confident that they had Mr. Hamlin beaten. Their plan was to enter their four candidates in the Senate caucus, and ultimately concentrate their strength on the one who should develop the largest following and pit him against Mr. Hamlin, in hopes of forcing a deadlock, as they had done in 1846. Mr. Hamlin's friends prudently refrained from disclosing their strength for the reason that a knowledge of their numbers might lead the corrupt element that seduced David Dunn in 1846 to attempt a renewal of dishonorable tactics. They said nothing, but quietly accepted the professions of the pro-slavery men at their face value, and suggested that an agreement be made that both sides support the party nominee, whoever he might be. Confident that they could beat the Hamlin forces in the Senate, the pro-slavery men bound themselves to this agreement. Among themselves they argued with no little merriment that if they could nominate their man in the Senate, and if the House should select Mr. Hamlin, there would be no party nominee, and in that contingency they would be free to carry out their original programme.

Each house held its caucus on the same day — May 29. The House nominated Mr. Hamlin by a handsome majority, as was generally believed it would. Interest was focused on the Senate. On the first ballot Mr. Hamlin lacked a few votes necessary to nominate him. He had a plurality over each of the four candidates against him, but not a majority over all. The balance of power was held by a few men who had been waiting to see which way the tide was going to turn before taking sides. They naturally favored the nomination of an anti-slavery man, but they did not like the idea of going counter to the dictates of the machine. Mr. Hamlin's friends, for this reason, did not throw their full strength on the first ballot. On the second ballot they increased Mr. Hamlin's vote by one; on the third by two, and on the fourth the wavering senators joined the Hamlin forces and gave him fourteen votes, a majority of one over Clifford, Wells,



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Anderson, and McCrate. The pro-slavery men were dumfounded at the result, but when they recovered from their surprise, they found their pledges to support the nominee staring them in the face. They could do nothing but redeem their promise, and they acquiesced in Mr. Hamlin's nomination, comforting themselves by reminding each other that his term was only three years, and that in the mean time they could prepare themselves for the fight against him in 1851. These pledges they kept, as will appear later. Mr. Hamlin was duly declared the nominee, and elected United States senator. Elijah L. Hamlin was a member of the House, and as a Whig voted for George Evans, the nominee of his party. A few weeks later Elijah L. Hamlin was nominated by the Whigs as their candidate for governor, and Senator Hamlin had to take the stump against his brother, who was defeated.

The same month in which Mr. Hamlin was elected to the Senate, the National Democratic Convention assembled at Baltimore to nominate a candidate for President. The events of the Polk administration proved that the slavery leaders were the power behind the throne of the Democracy, and there were signs of a bitter struggle for the mastery of this convention. The factional differences between the New York Democracy had precluded the renomination of Mr. Polk. Mr. Van Buren still desired a vindication, and his friends cherished a desire for revenge on the Southern Democracy for setting him aside in 1844. The sudden death of Silas Wright reopened old wounds, and his followers in New York were opposed to Mr. Polk's renomination on account of his course in rejecting advice he had sought from Governor Wright in appointing his secretary of the treasury. Thus the anomalous spectacle was presented of anti-slavery and pro-slavery Democrats joining hands to punish the slave power of their party. This faction, led by Mr. Van Buren, was known as the Barnburners; the other, led by William L. Marcy, the Secretary of State, was called the Hunkers. Each sent a delegation to the convention, and refused reasonable offers of compromise. The Barnburners withdrew and announced their intention of making war on the ticket, should it displease them.

This action on the part of the Barnburners not only rendered Mr. Polk's renomination inadvisable, but also peremptorily forbade the selection of Mr. Marcy, who was, perhaps, the ablest leader of the pro-slavery faction, next to Mr. Calhoun. The convention was therefore restricted to making its choice from General Lewis Cass, James Buchanan, and Levi Woodbury, who were the chief candidates considered. Of these three Mr. Hamlin preferred Woodbury. He knew Woodbury personally; he believed him to be safe on the slavery question, and to be amply qualified by ability, character, and expe-

rience to fill the presidency. He had also been one of Andrew Jackson's lieutenants, having been secretary of the treasury during Jackson's second term. He had been senator, and was now associate justice of the Supreme Court. In short, Woodbury was a wheel-horse of the Democracy, and would have been a good President. General Cass was a man of high personal character and pronounced ability, but he took the politician's view of slavery and did not seem to see the moral side of it. Mr. Buchanan appeared to Mr. Hamlin to be too pliant and weak to be President. The convention was dominated by the Southern wing, and its leaders, not daring to put forward one of their own men, dictated the nomination of General Cass in the belief that he was a "Northern man with Southern principles." It is perfectly proper to add that when events, in 1860-61, opened General Cass's eyes to the dangers of slavery, he proved his loyalty to the Union by withdrawing from Buchanan's Cabinet.

The nomination of General Cass was displeasing to Mr. Van Buren and his friends. They charged that General Cass, by allowing the use of his name in the convention of 1840, contributed to the defeat of Mr. Van Buren. They decided to bolt Cass, and called a convention of their own at Buffalo. Mr. Van Buren professed his concessions to the principles of Free-Soil, and in this move the more optimistic of the anti-slavery men thought they saw the dawn of a better day. The result was that a sympathetic movement was begun among the Free-Soilers of both parties to coöperate in forming a new party at this convention. Good and true anti-slavery men favored this movement and came to Buffalo. There were Democrats present, such as Salmon P. Chase, Preston King, James S. Wadsworth, John A. Dix, David Dudley Field, and Benjamin F. Butler, of New York. Among the Whigs was Charles Francis Adams, and among the Abolitionists was Joshua R. Giddings. Mr. Van Buren was nominated for President, and Mr. Adams for Vice-President. The Whigs completely begged the issue of slavery extension by nominating General Zachary Taylor on his military record as their platform. All that the public knew about General Taylor at the time was that he was a good soldier who was highly respected by his associates, and was also a large slaveholder. The situation did not seem promising to anti-slavery Democrats. General Cass apparently pledged himself to oppose the principles of the Wilmot Proviso by writing what was called the Nicholson letter. Senator Hamlin was a strong party man, and it was his custom to stand by his party. He believed that great results in national affairs could be best obtained through party coöperation, but he also held that parties erred like men and were to be judged as men were. He was disappointed at the defeat of Woodbury, and he was disturbed over General Cass's apparent repudiation



of the Wilmot Proviso. But he was not in the habit of judging men before he tried them, or leaping before he looked. He saw General Cass, and from him obtained a definite statement, that if he should be elected President he would not veto a bill prohibiting the extension of slavery into territory then free.<sup>1</sup> In the political game between the Northern and Southern leaders of the Democracy, General Cass appeared to believe that it was the North's time to take its turn. But if Senator Hamlin found General Cass's position inconsistent with his own ideas of truth and candor, he also found equal insincerity in the professions of Mr. Van Buren. He well knew the lengths to which a political feud would carry men, and he also understood that the Buffalo convention was manipulated by the friends of Mr. Van Buren.<sup>2</sup> He concluded that they were animated by a desire of revenge rather than by a sincere wish to promote the principles of Free-Soil. There was a final consideration that decided Mr. Hamlin to stand by his party. He had been elected to the Senate as an anti-slavery leader, and it was a part of his duty to keep his party in Maine from falling into the hands of the slave power. If he left his party he would lose his hold on it, and there was now a pro-slavery Democrat from Maine in the Senate, Mr. Bradbury. Mr. Hamlin was engaged in the difficult task of "leading his constituents out of the woods," and by remaining with them he exerted an influence he never could wield outside of his party. His reasoning was vindicated within one year by events. Cass was defeated, and Van Buren enjoyed the exquisite satisfaction of polling more votes in New York than Cass did. All Van Buren wanted was revenge, for after beating Cass, Mr. Van Buren threw his Free-Soil professions to the winds and returned to full alliance with his party as a pro-slavery man. In the words of Henry Wilson, then a Free-Soil Whig, "Who then could have imagined that within one brief year the very men who made this gallant fight . . . should return to the ranks they had so effectually broken, . . . aid by voice and vote in again placing in power the men who were found ready to indorse the wicked compromise of 1850?"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When a candidate for reelection to the Senate in 1851, Senator Hamlin wrote to George F. Emery, of Portland, as follows: "I had such information as led me honestly to believe that Cass would never veto a bill prohibiting slavery. I believed so; and was I not in a position to aid all who with me went for Free-Soil? Could I not stand up in the Senate, demand a restriction of slavery, and demand it on the ground that I went for Cass's election with that expectation? I believed then, as I do now, that I could truly aid the cause of freedom by my course. What the Free-Soil men will do, I cannot tell. I only know that I will battle faithfully for Free-Soil, whether defeated or successful."

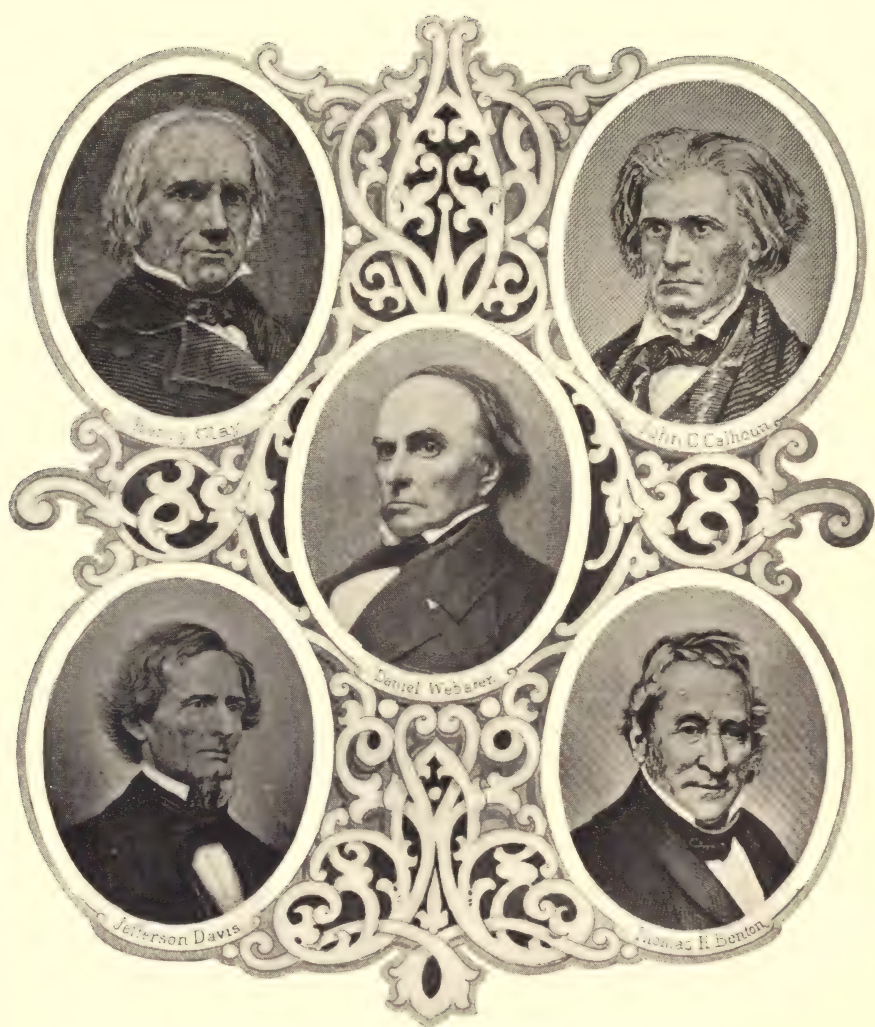
<sup>2</sup> Lincoln satirized the elastic plank of the Buffalo convention by saying that it reminded him of what the Yankee peddler said of a pair of trousers he had for sale, "large enough for a man and small enough for a boy."

<sup>3</sup> Wilson's *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, vol. ii. p. 158.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MR. HAMLIN IN THE SENATE

THE golden age of American oratory was still in its glory when Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate. Webster was at the height of his powers and authority. Calhoun, although on the decline, was still the master mind of his party. The return of Clay reunited this Titanic trio for the last time in the Senate. Another great figure was Benton, the Roman of his party. The most brilliant campaign orator of this period was Thomas Corwin, and he was one of the senators from Ohio. Willie P. Mangum and George E. Badger, of North Carolina, John McPherson Berrien, of Georgia, John M. Clayton, of Delaware, John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, and Reverdy Johnson, of Maryland, were a notable group of high-minded, cultivated, able statesmen, and pro-slavery Union Whigs, who represented a conservative element that was soon to be supplanted by the aggressive Southern wing of the Democratic party. Jefferson Davis was now recognized in the Senate as a coming leader of that faction, and an aspiring heir to Calhoun's mantle. With him David R. Atchison, of Missouri, David L. Yulee, of Florida, James M. Mason, of Virginia, author of the Fugitive Slave Law, formed a group of historic interest. John Davis, of Massachusetts, and William L. Dayton, of New Jersey, represented the element of the Whig party that was merged into the Republican party eight years later and nominated Mr. Dayton for Vice-President. Stephen A. Douglas was forging to the front as the leader of that wing of the Northern Democracy that regarded slavery as a political rather than a moral issue, and was considered as a presidential candidate. General Sam Houston, of Texas, brave, able, and picturesque, was a Southern man of the Jackson type, and believed by many to be a coming President. Still another presidential possibility was John Bell, of Tennessee, able and statesmanlike, and now an opponent to the slave power. Charles G. Atherton, of New Hampshire, author of the Atherton gag, and Jesse D. Bright, of Indiana, who was subsequently expelled from the Senate for treason, were conspicuous as Northern men with Southern principles. Roger S. Baldwin and John M. Niles were worthy representatives of Connecticut. R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, was a Southern leader of distinction who was highly esteemed by his opponents for his per-



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sonal qualities. Andrew Pickens Butler, of South Carolina, was impulsive and generous by nature, and his impassioned utterances rarely left a sting. Henry S. Foote, of Mississippi, brilliant but erratic, was the disturbing factor in the Senate, and often as much a thorn to the disunionists as to the anti-slavery party. Daniel S. Dickinson, a self-made man of ability and character, and the soldierly John A. Dix maintained a conservative attitude towards slavery, the policy the New York Democracy generally followed. In John P. Hale, brilliant and whole-souled, the anti-slavery party had a devoted champion who had stood virtually alone until Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate. Another indication of the great changes working among the masses at the North was the fact that Salmon P. Chase had already been chosen the successor to William Allen, of Ohio. Simon Cameron, the shrewdest political manager this country has yet produced, was beginning his long career as a senator from Pennsylvania. In truth, the Senate of 1848 was an assembly of great and interesting men, nearly all of whom consciously or unconsciously helped cast the shadows of the drama of 1860. The place this Senate holds in history is told in Mr. Blaine's well-chosen words: "At no time before or since in the history of the Senate has its membership been so illustrious, its weight of character and ability so great."

The senate chamber was the room now occupied by the Supreme Court of the United States. Modeled after the Grecian theatre, it was noted for its fine acoustic properties. The proceedings were conducted with great dignity and decorum, although an occasional bitter personal encounter took place. Senatorial courtesy had not yet reached that stage of development which transformed the Senate into an offensive and defensive alliance. Vice-President Dallas was the presiding officer, and he was truly the embodiment of senatorial dignity and diplomatic courtesy. The two senators from Arkansas differed as to pronunciation of the name of their State. Mr. Dallas rose above the difficulty by recognizing one as the "senator from Arkansas," and the other as "the senator from Arkansaw." Ideas of dress as well as of etiquette prevailed that are now absent from the Senate. There was a recognized senatorial toga, and this was the claw-hammer coat. Certain deferential customs were maintained in the public intercourse among the senators, to accentuate the importance of the senatorial function. For example, when a punctilious orator had to refer to a remark of a colleague, he would usually say, "It fell from the senator," as if he had shed words of wisdom.

Behind the scenes the senators relaxed themselves. They were like lawyers who, after having launched their thunder at each other in court, found recreation in enjoying each other's society. The god-like Webster would sometimes signalize his release from duties by

wrapping his powerful arms around Mason and Douglas, and give them a bear-like hug. Calhoun ceased to be a Spartan, and became one of the most delightful of men. Henry Clay's imperious manner vanished, and he was soon the centre of a story-telling group. Benton was no longer the Roman, but a cordial, warm-hearted man, who seemed to have no other object than to entertain his friends. Andrew Pickens Butler, after one of his attacks on John P. Hale, would seek what was known as the "cave in the wall," and having cooled down, would engage in repartee and anecdote with his anti-slavery antagonist with the enjoyment of a generous nature. Jefferson Davis, high-bred and courteous, was active in the social life of the Senate. Mr. Hamlin enjoyed pleasant personal relations with Webster, Clay, and the Great Nullifier, although he did not believe in their principles. From the first he was drawn to Benton as the representative Jackson Democrat of his day, and the relations he sustained with the latter are a chapter for another place in these pages. He early formed a close social and party intimacy with Jefferson Davis, the story of which is to be told elsewhere.

When Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate, Congress was once more embroiled in the Oregon controversy, which had been renewed since he left the House. This time the question of Oregon's rights arose for final settlement, and thus it happened that Mr. Hamlin took his seat in the Senate in season to help Oregon save herself from slavery. While this was a famous struggle in its day and severely agitated the country, it was overshadowed by the greater events that ensued. It is of historical importance and personal interest to this narrative. In the latter stage of the Oregon controversy may be found the genesis of the plan to bring the Supreme Court of the United States to the aid of the slave power. The debate also led Mr. Hamlin to make his first anti-slavery speech in the Senate. This speech, by the way, resulted in interesting Abraham Lincoln, who was then a member of the House, in Mr. Hamlin. He heard it and gave it his warm approval.

When Mr. Hamlin was in the House, it will be recalled, the bill was passed granting Oregon territorial government, and prohibiting slavery within her borders. Although the people of Oregon demanded a free government, the pro-slavery Senate was bold enough to repudiate the first principles of self-government by refusing to pass the bill in the face of a strong demand. But action could be delayed no longer now. Lawless men were flocking to Oregon, and the citizens of the territory were compelled to take the law into their own hands. President Polk referred to this in a message to Congress. Further delay by Congress to give Oregon the simple means of self-defense from marauders was certain to create a national scandal.



What Oregon asked was what had been granted to other territories, — Iowa, for instance, — the machinery of law and the right to regulate her own internal affairs. Why was Oregon singled out as an exception to the general rule? It was plain now to the leaders of the slave party that they must show their colors and make their intentions known. What they wanted was to force slavery into all territory out of which States were likely to be formed in the near future. This territory then included Oregon, Upper and Lower California, and New Mexico.

This scheme was generally understood throughout the North; but it must not be forgotten that the slave party had not yet directly acknowledged its purpose, and was not a unit in working to this end until the Oregon controversy came up for final settlement. Undoubtedly the leaders of the slave party intended to make as fierce a fight as possible for the possession of Oregon as well as California and New Mexico; but, failing in the case of the former territory, they planned to make use of the controversy over Oregon as a basis of compromise in dealing with the other territories. They were determined not to lose the hard-earned results of the Mexican war, — California and New Mexico. The thought that they might infuriated them. Events were therefore ripe for a fight to a finish, so to speak, when Stephen A. Douglas, at the beginning of this session of Congress, introduced a bill organizing a government in Oregon similar to that which Congress had granted to Iowa, and which forbade the introduction of slavery. John P. Hale offered an amendment embracing the principles of the Ordinance of 1787. These measures together were too much for the slavery leaders. Their pent-up anger escaped; they threw prudence to the winds, and in their wrath they let out their desires. Mr. Calhoun had the audacity of his wishes. He boldly proclaimed his doctrine, that "the national flag carries slavery wherever it floats." He laid down some dogmas in support of this doctrine, that "Congress had no right to prevent a citizen of a slave State from emigrating with his slave property to any territory, and holding his slaves there in servitude;" that "the people of such territory have no right to legislate adversely thereto," and that "Congress has no right to vest such authority in a territorial government."

The significance of these declarations was that the slave controversy had entered on a new stage. The terms "Whigs" and "Democrats" had little meaning now among the Southern members of Congress. They rallied around the standard of Calhoun, and accepted his declaration that "the national flag carries slavery wherever it floats" as their shibboleth. Conservative Whigs, such as Berrien, of Georgia, and Clayton, of Delaware, worked with Jefferson Davis, the

leader of the young, aggressive Southern Democracy. Mr. Davis made an extreme speech, in which he defined the slave as a chattel, and claimed that for that reason the owner could take his property wherever he liked. According to this the doctrine of state rights was inoperative in a free State if a slaveholder chose to appear in it with his "property." But the debate popularized this theory with the slave party, and it was adopted as a cardinal principle, whereas before it had been tentatively presented. Although Mr. Davis's speech was extreme, it sounded the note of compromise. He was a spokesman of the slave party, and its leaders were now evidently looking beyond Oregon and at California and New Mexico.

But there was nothing to compromise, and so much the better for the slave power. If it could hoodwink the Northern congressmen into believing that a compromise was the only way out of the difficulty, it was sure to gain a point. Mr. Clayton, of Delaware, moved that the Douglas bill be referred to a select committee of eight, — four from the North and four from the South. This motion appealed equally to the senators who supported slavery, and those who believed in "the glue of compromise," and those who worshiped the function of committee deliverance. Only fourteen senators opposed it, and among them were Messrs. Hamlin, Hale, Dix, Niles, Baldwin, and John Davis. Two of the Northern men appointed were Jesse D. Bright, of Indiana, who was expelled from the Senate for treason in 1862, and Daniel S. Dickinson, of New York, an honorable man, but one who never saw the slave power in its true light until the war. Mr. Dickinson said that he beheld "a gleam of sunshine" in Mr. Clayton's motion. That is why he was placed on the committee. There was but one anti-slavery man on this committee, — S. S. Phelps, of Vermont. It was a packed court.

The deliverance of this committee was called the Clayton compromise. It was an extraordinary affair. Instead of dealing with Oregon exclusively, or with each territory separately, the committee lumped the three territories together in a log-rolling scheme. Instead of taking action on the slavery question, it dodged and recommended that the matter be referred to the Supreme Court of the United States. This was a crafty plan, and it failed by a miracle. The court was a strong pro-slavery body, and although its members were pure and high-minded men, they were biased, and so strongly tinctured with slavery ideas that, had they sat on this question, Oregon, California, and New Mexico would have been doomed to slavery, or the final struggle might have been precipitated then. It is not necessary to add that the anti-slavery senators fought this bill resolutely, and the main discussion was on the abstract and concrete questions that slavery involved. Mr. Hamlin's speech differed somewhat from the

general order of remarks heard in the Senate. While he denounced the institution of slavery with characteristic bluntness and force, his speech is more interesting as an exposition of the character of the bill. In this respect it is one of the best to be found in the "Congressional Record." He condemned the bill as a fraud, a snare, and a delusion. The speech was widely circulated in pamphlet among the anti-slavery documents of the time.

This was the year of '48, "the year of revolutions," when a democratic movement swept over Europe and seemed to presage the springing up of republican institutions all over the Old World. Mr. Hamlin, in opening his remarks, pictured in a few terse sentences the contrast afforded.

"It is indeed startling," said he, "that in the middle of the nineteenth century, — in this model republic, with the sun of liberty shining upon us, and while the governments of Europe are tottering to their base from the lights reflected from our own, and while they are striking down the shackles of tyranny over the minds of men, — we have been gravely discussing the proposition whether we will not create by law the institution of human slavery in territories now free. Such is the question in direct terms before us; such, in fact, is the issue now. Sophistry cannot evade it; metaphysics cannot escape it. . . . The crisis is now upon us. . . . We are about to shape and mould the character of these territories, which in time will become a mighty empire. Whether that country shall present all the elements of a free government, in which man is elevated as an intellectual and moral being, or whether the despotism of slavery shall imprint its soil, are matters depending entirely on us. We must act. . . . The issue cannot be avoided. . . .

"The bill like the proposition discussed by the Senate does not profess to establish slavery by law. It leaves slavery to extend itself by the 'silent operation' of the law, without restriction. It does not guaranty slavery; but will it not permit slavery? And after it has found an existence, will it not demand a guaranty? Thus, without inhibition will it not become certain and fixed by the process of time? . . . I solemnly believe that this bill will allow of the extension of slavery as certainly as if it created slavery in express words. The bill, as I understand it, concedes practically all the ultra-doctrinaires of the South demand. Let us then erect a barrier to this tide of moral evil. . . . It will thrill the country like an electric shock when it is known that the acquisition of territory from a foreign power necessarily subjects it to the institution of slavery, that the flag of this Union carries slavery wherever it floats. This is a new principle in the doctrines of slavery propagandism. It is not the doctrine of the founders of the republic. Democracy has been called progressive, but my word for it, she goes along in the old-fashioned stage-coach style, while this doctrine of slavery propagandism has mounted the railroad cars. . . . I repeat, it will startle the North when it is known that it is gravely announced here that the Constitution of the United States . . . carries with it and extends the institution



of slavery; that it, in fact, abrogates the laws of the free and gives instead the powers of servitude. . . . These doctrines are not to be deduced from the Constitution, but are in derogation of its letter and spirit; that instrument is, in all its terms and in all its scope, an anti-slavery instrument. It was conceived, it was enacted, it was approved by the States of this Union, not in the spirit of extension or creation of slavery, but in a spirit which looked to the future emancipation of the slave in this country."<sup>1</sup>

With this introduction, Mr. Hamlin discussed the Calhoun dogma, that the Constitution contained within its provisions a power to establish and extend slavery over free territory. This amounted to the notion that as the territories belonged to all the people, and as the Constitution recognized slavery, it therefore authorized the institution in the territories. Mr. Hamlin quoted from articles one and four of the Constitution, and showed that it simply recognized slavery as existing; it did not provide for the creation or extension of the institution. In one instance, the Constitution spoke of slaves as a basis of taxation and representation, and in the other with regard to the laws requiring the free States to return fugitive slaves. That was all. The falsity of the interpretation that the supporters of slavery placed on the Constitution was exposed by Mr. Hamlin in these words:—

"The argument that slavery is recognized by the Constitution is used as an equivalent to establishing it. The laws of the State support and maintain it," Mr. Hamlin continued, "not the Constitution. It is a state institution resting on the local law of the State, without the aid, without the support, without the maintenance, of the Constitution in any way whatever. . . . If the institution of slavery is one which has its foundation in the Constitution, and not one resting upon the laws of the State, where is the limit to its extension? What is the next step in the application of the argument? After you have overrun your territories, what power can prevent the slaveholder from coming into the free States with his slaves? If his right is a constitutional one, if he rests his claim there, and is correct, a state law could not affect him, because it would be in conflict with the Constitution. . . . The Constitution gives no right, it creates no right; it merely recognizes a right which is created by the laws of the State. That slavery is a local institution there can be no doubt. The courts of nearly all the States have so decided. . . . The moment a slave goes beyond the limits of a State where slavery exists, he becomes free. Slavery, therefore, must look alone to local laws for its support.

"I hold that the Constitution in and of itself, and by its express language, authorizes Congress to inhibit this institution in our territories. . . . What is the language of this clause of the Constitution? 'Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.'"

Mr. Hamlin traced the history of this clause. No such power

<sup>1</sup> For example, the slave trade was abolished.

existed in the articles of confederation, and when the Constitution was formed this power was granted to Congress. It was exercised by numerous presidents, and declared valid by the Supreme Court.

"Again," said Mr. Hamlin, "the power is contained in the bill upon which we are acting. It continues the laws of Oregon in force for three months after the meeting of the legislature. It provides in the territories of California and New Mexico that the legislative power shall not pass any laws on the subject of religion or slavery. . . . If the Constitution was silent, as it is not, yet under that power which can acquire we can most certainly govern. It matters little where you can find the power to acquire; if you do acquire you must have the power to govern. The first is the major, the second is the minor proposition. It would not be good sense to contend that we have a power to acquire public domain, and yet could not pass needful rules and regulations for its government. . . . Casuists have been known to deny their own existence and satisfactorily to prove it to their own minds. That may be a plausible and practical doctrine when contrasted with the one that we have no power to govern our own territories. . . .

"Having the power to act, what is the responsible duty which I feel imposed on me? It is that I should exert all the power which the Constitution gives to exclude the institution of slavery from our territories now free, because it is a social, moral, and political evil. That such is its character needs no argument to prove. They are conceded facts — supported by the declarations and admonitions of the best and wisest men of the South,

" 'In thoughts that breathe and words that burn.'"

"I would resist the introduction of that institution in justice to a superior race of men, — men who are capable of a higher state of social and political refinement. I would institute such governments as are best calculated to advance the true interests of our own Caucasian race, and not degrade the dignity of labor by fastening upon it the incubus of slavery. I would resist it because I would not invoke or use the name of Democracy to strike down as with the iron mace of a despot the principles of social equality and freedom. I would not profane the sacred name of Freedom while using it to impose a tyranny upon the minds or persons of men. Jefferson has said that 'God has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a cause.' The eloquent Pinckney has declared that 'the earth itself, which teems with profusion under the cultivating hand of the freeborn laborer, shrinks into barrenness from the contaminating sweat of the slave.' Sir, my course is a plain one, and clear from all doubt. Our position is unquestionable. We stand in defense of free soil and resist aggressive slavery, and we demand enactments for the protection of free soil against this aggression. We will not disturb that institution, but we will stand in defense of the freedom of our soil as right in principle and beneficial to free white labor in all parts of our common country."

Mr. Hamlin next discussed compromise, and in connection with

that subject he revealed again the fraudulent nature of the bill and the crooked record of the slave party in dealing with Oregon. He briefly related the history of Oregon's efforts to secure a free government, and charged the pro-slavery Senate with killing every bill the House passed for Oregon's relief. The Douglas bill had a provision inhibiting slavery, but it was recommitted to the committee of eight, and reported back "chained" to other territorial bills, with the anti-slavery provision so modified that it secured freedom for Oregon for three months only after the first territorial legislature should meet.

"This bill," said Mr. Hamlin, "is called by some a compromise; all that I can see which entitles it to that name is that it does provide that the laws in Oregon which exclude slavery shall remain in force for three months. A compromise, indeed! . . . Why was the law regarding the exclusion of slavery not permitted to remain in force until the territorial legislature should see fit to change it? Why abrogate and then compel them to change their laws? Sir, it is not worth the name of compromise. This is the fundamental objection: It repeals all the laws of the territory after three months, and the seventeenth section provides that 'All laws passed by the legislative assembly shall be submitted to the Congress of the United States, and if disapproved, shall be null and of no effect,' thus making the legislative acts of Oregon depend upon our approval or disapproval. Is it not, then, literally true that this bill concedes the free principle to Oregon for only three months, after which it must depend on our action here?"

Mr. Hamlin next exposed two grossly inconsistent features of the bill, and the causes of their adoption. One gave Oregon a territorial government with the right to elect a legislature; the other denied California and New Mexico a territorial government and legislature, but vested all authority in the governors, secretaries, and judges, to be appointed by the President, and forbade them passing any laws respecting religion and slavery. Mr. Hamlin stigmatized the provision relating to California and New Mexico as creating an "odious oligarchy." He asked:—

"Why adopt one system for Oregon and another for California? Is it said that the people of California are not yet suited to participate in a free government or in the enactment of laws? If such were the fact, why wholly exclude them from all rights? But senators know that even at this day there are some five or six thousand American citizens there, and they are ruthlessly excluded. Is their capacity for free government to be mistrusted? Is it not rather from the fact that they would set up a free government that they are deprived of all power? I know there is a mixed population in California; and so there is in Oregon; but the same limitations and restrictions which apply in one case can be applied in the other. The right of voting has been confined in Oregon to the 'free white inhab-



itants.' The same limitations may apply to California. No sound distinction can be drawn in these cases; yet a republican government is established in one case and an oligarchy in the other. . . . Is it not better to authorize our own people to participate in this government and allow the free Castilian race the same power? Is it not sound policy as well as correct in principle? Will it not fraternize them with our people and our government? On the other hand, without power in the local laws by which they are governed, will they not be alien to our Union and un-fraternal to our people? It must not be forgotten that all laws which would be passed in California, as in Oregon, would be subject to the approval or disapproval of Congress. This system is wholly repugnant to our form of government. It is in violation of the fundamental principle which recognizes the 'consent of the governed' as the basis of government."

Mr. Hamlin's most convincing exposition of the artful character and insincere purpose of the bill was made when he took up the claim that the measure was framed to settle the question of slavery in the territories by referring the matter to the Supreme Court of the United States from the Supreme Court of the territory. It actually prevented such a reference. He read a clause in the bill which provided that appeals from the Supreme Court of the territory should "be taken to the Supreme Court of the United States in the same manner, and under the same regulations, as from the Circuit Court of the United States." But it happened, as Mr. Hamlin demonstrated, that the right of appeal from the Circuit Court to the Supreme Court of the United States was granted "where the matter in dispute exceeds the sum of two thousand dollars." Thus, slaves that were worth less than this sum were barred out from taking an appeal. On this and other points Mr. Hamlin said:—

"The settlement of the question of slavery by this bill, it is said, is to be determined by the Supreme Court. . . . This is the first instance in the history of legislation where a question purely of a historical character has been transferred to the judiciary. It is avoiding what necessarily belongs to us to determine. Is this the part of wisdom, or manly dignity and firmness, to avoid settlement of a question which is political and which belongs to us? I think not. . . . Suppose slavery steals into the territories, as it will (under the bill), how can the slave avail himself of this right of appeal? Who is to aid him in the first instance to obtain his writ of habeas corpus on which to try his right to freedom? And if he should get that process and take his first step, how could he appeal? Who would be his surety? And at the distance of three thousand miles from Washington, by what means could he reach the court? This right of appeal, if it existed by law, could have no practical effect whatever. It leaves all unsettled, in fact, while two lines in a law we may pass, by simply inhibiting the institution, will settle all. . . . If it could apply to one case it would be powerless in thousands. It is all delusive. It does not allow an appeal at all.

"How, then, stands the case? You establish a government in California; a governor and secretary are appointed by the President, and three judges who are not removable. To them you submit the legislative power of the territory; you deny them the power to legislate at all upon the subjects of religion and slavery, even if every person in the territory should desire to exclude the latter. You deprive the people of the right to act at all,—you refuse to act here, nearly one half of the Senate denying the power to act. Is this not virtually building up a wall around that territory which will and which must serve as a protection to that institution? What is the origin of slavery? It is never created by law; it steals into territory and then claims a law to recognize it. . . . It exists by brute force, in violation of the rights of everything human or divine. . . .

"Looking to the lights of other days—the patriots of other times—the eloquent warnings which we have from our Washington, Madison, our Jefferson, our Mason, aye, and from our Pinckney, too, and all that long list of patriotic men of the South who have adorned this Union, who have pointed out the evils that would come upon us by perpetuating and extending this institution, I owe it to the constituents whom I represent, to our posterity, to all the toiling millions who are seeking an asylum in our land, to embrace this opportunity of opposing, with unshaken firmness, any attempt to introduce or permit this institution to flow into any territory now free. Let these vast and fertile regions be preserved for the cultivation of free labor and free men, so well calculated to advance the arts of civilization. Do this, and the busy millions of future ages shall bless our acts with grateful hearts."

The story of Oregon's struggle for free soil should be followed to the end in order to get a complete idea of the tenacity of the slave power in its desire to make Oregon a slave State. The debate continued for several days, and on the morning of July 22, at eight o'clock, after a continuous session of twenty-one hours, the compromise bill was passed by eleven majority. Among those who voted against this surrender to the slave power were Messrs. Hamlin, Hale, John Davis, William Allen, Bradbury, Dayton, Dix, Niles, Corwin. Badger, of North Carolina, Bell, of Tennessee, and Metcalfe, of Kentucky, were the only Southern senators who were still obedient to their implied duty.

But Oregon was still to be saved. When the bill was sent to the House, Alexander H. Stephens moved that the measure be tabled, and his motion prevailed. The bill had a chance of success in the House, where the arguments for compromise were potent also. Whether Mr. Stephens threw away this opportunity by reason of timidity or an attack of mental blindness was a matter of speculation. While he did not always serve the slave power blindly, the fact is obvious that the cause of freedom in this instance received opportune aid from one who was generally allied with the slave party.

Still the struggle continued. Caleb B. Smith, in February, had introduced into the House a bill to organize a territorial government in Oregon, and it was passed in March by a large majority, in spite of the leaders of the slave party, who objected to its free clause. In August, Mr. Douglas introduced this bill into the Senate, with an amendment applying the Ordinance of 1787 to Oregon, with the reason, "Inasmuch as said territory is north of the parallel of 36° 30' north latitude, usually known as the line of the Missouri Compromise." Once more a bitter debate ensued on the question of slavery — the alleged rights and wrongs of the North and the South. Mr. Douglas told the Senate that the Ordinance of 1787 had been incorporated in his bill by the Committee on Territories, in which it was formed, because "it desired that no senator should commit himself on the great question." But this artful plea induced only two senators to vote for the amendment, — Mr. Douglas himself and Bright. Yet the everlasting merits, virtues, and necessities of compromise were again officially brought before the Senate, and that weary body agreed by eleven majority to Mr. Douglas's next proposition, to extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean. Mr. Hamlin voted against this compromise, and it is an instructive and interesting circumstance that among his companions in this vote were John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster, the latter having spoken strongly against the attempt to rob Oregon of her rights.

But all this manœuvring in the Senate went for naught. The House, with only three dissenting votes, rejected the compromise amendment when it came from the Senate, and the bill was returned. The genius, courage, and force of Benton came to the rescue. He moved that the Senate recede from the amendment. Perhaps it was the indiscreet utterance of John C. Calhoun, that "the great strife between the North and South is ended, the separation of the North and South is complete," that was the final cause which decided the fate of the bill to give Oregon her freedom. At all events, John Bell and Sam Houston disavowed Calhoun's sentiments as representative of the South, and General Houston was among those who changed their votes. The debate continued day and night, until the exhausted Senate was driven to close it on August 13, at nine o'clock in the morning, after an all-night session. At midnight, before the vote was taken, the incorrigible Foote announced his ability and intention of speaking continuously for two days and nights. The senators expressed their willingness to have him try it. He was actually speaking at nine o'clock the next morning, when debate was shut off. Mr. Douglas, General Houston, and a few other senators followed the lead of Benton in changing their votes, and by a majority of four votes the unprecedented struggle between the anti-slavery and pro-



slavery parties, that had lasted for many months, was closed, and Oregon was a free territory forever.

Soon after Mr. Hamlin took his seat in the Senate, he heard of Abraham Lincoln, who was serving his first and only term in the House of Representatives. Mr. Lincoln did not make much of a mark as a legislator or debater; he was in the House too short a time to make his peculiar personality felt to a great extent in shaping legislation. Mr. Hamlin first heard Mr. Lincoln spoken of as a "rattling stump orator," the "champion story-teller of the House," and the "most striking-looking man in Congress." The general impression about Lincoln, as Mr. Hamlin related in subsequent years, was that he was the personification of geniality and democracy, a faithful worker, and always ready for a good story. He was often seen in the cloak-room of the House tilted back in a chair, with his legs crossed, and a crowd around him listening to the fund of interesting and amusing stories that rolled out of him.

The day Mr. Hamlin made his speech on the compromise bill, he observed among his auditors a man who towered up above the outsiders who crowded the outer aisles of the Senate floor, like an oak in a forest of saplings. His appearance was so unusual—of immense size, loosely hung frame, homely, but expressive face—that Mr. Hamlin could not fail to note him. Mr. Hamlin knew that it must be Lincoln, and he observed that Lincoln followed his speech with apparent interest, nodding his head from time to time, as a sign of approval, when Mr. Hamlin made a good point against slavery.

A few days after this Mr. Hamlin was called into the House, where he found Lincoln in the middle of a speech. Part of the speech was of the rough-and-tumble order he made in his early days, when he was struggling to get a hearing with the masses in Illinois; but the most was pure good-nature. While Lincoln's face was homely, and his movements seemed awkward, when his face was lighted up with a smile, his countenance took on an appearance of irresistible good-humor and frankness, and men felt drawn to him. When he reached the heart of his subject, he was bubbling over with fun, and had the House completely under the spell of his humor and magnetism. Although Mr. Lincoln was speaking at the expense of the Democrats, they enjoyed it immensely. Members crowded around him to hear every word he said. He completely dominated the situation. Mr. Hamlin never forgot this scene, which was a unique illustration of Mr. Lincoln's power over his audiences. When Mr. Hamlin entered the House, the future President was saying in his quaint, droll way:—

"By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know that I am a military hero? Yes, sir, in the days of the Black Hawk war, I fought, bled, and came away.

Speaking of General Cass's career reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman's defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull's surrender; and like him saw the place very soon afterwards. It is quite certain that I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent a musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation; I bent the musket by accident. If General Cass went in advance of me in picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges upon the wild onions. If he saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did, but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes; and although I never fainted from loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry. Mr. Speaker, if I should ever conclude to doff whatever our Democratic friends may suppose there is of black cockade federalism about me, and thereupon they shall take me up as their candidate for the presidency, I protest they shall not make fun of me as they have of General Cass by attempting to write me into a military hero."

Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Lincoln did not meet until after the presidential campaign of 1860. Almost the first thing Mr. Lincoln said was in reference to the speech Mr. Hamlin made on the Oregon Compromise Bill.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE COMPROMISES OF 1850

WHEN General Zachary Taylor was inaugurated President on March 4, 1849, the opponents and supporters of slavery knew that a great crisis was imminent, and prepared themselves for the struggle. The contest was over the disposition of the territory acquired from Mexico. The interests involved were immense, for they included the region that now mostly comprises California, New Mexico, Arizona, and other territory. Texas, which had also been a part of Mexico, was already in the Union as a slave State. Now, as the slave power had planned and fought the war with Mexico, its leaders were naturally anxious to obtain the results of their scheming. In the waning hours of the Polk administration Mr. Calhoun attempted to rush a bill through Congress, attached to the general appropriation bill "extending the Constitution to the ceded territory." Once again, Mr. Calhoun enunciated his peculiar doctrine that "the flag carries slavery wherever it floats." This was trying to steal a march on the incoming administration. Daniel Webster exposed the flaw in Calhoun's argument as applied to the territories by showing that the Constitution was for the States, not for the territories, and that the latter to enjoy its benefits must organize themselves into States. Courtesy and fairness to the new administration should have deterred Mr. Calhoun from this course; but he was the genius of the slave power, and pressed the issue to a vote. Smarting under defeat, Mr. Calhoun called the famous secret meeting of the Southern congressmen, and issued his inflammatory address to the South, advising disunion, as plainly as he dared, in case the anti-slavery party should succeed in saving the new territory from the peculiar institution, under General Taylor's administration.

This was the situation that confronted General Taylor when he became President, and very few people knew what he would do. Probably no man ever came to the presidency with so little known about him as Zachary Taylor. When he was nominated by the Whigs for President, they were not sure that he was a good party man. Webster denounced the nomination as one "unfit to be made," and Clay at first refused to take part in the campaign. He was believed by the general public to be a gallant officer, and an honest, rough-and-



ready kind of a man, and the popular opinion was that he would eventually serve as the figurehead to an administration that would be conducted by other men. But the leaders of the Whigs who suggested General Taylor as their party candidate were not mistaken in their estimate of him. Although he had lived most of his life on the frontier, and had never even voted, he was nevertheless well informed about public men and measures, and had his own ideas about conducting his administration. Removed from the scene of excitement at the national capital, General Taylor had clearly perceived the rock towards which the ship of state was drifting. When he took the helm he displayed the same sagacity, coolness, judgment, and patriotism that had distinguished him as a commander on the battlefield.

When Congress convened, in December, 1849, for the first time under President Taylor's administration, the situation was complicated by unexpected happenings in California. The discovery of gold on the Pacific slope, late in the previous year, had drawn an immense army of men thither from the free States and elsewhere. Within a marvelously short time, California had more than enough citizens within her borders to fulfill the requirements of admission to the Union. The presence of lawless adventurers from all parts of the world made it necessary to organize a state government at once to preserve life and property. A constitutional convention was called; Thomas Butler King, of Georgia, who was in California, and was acting as the agent of the slave power, endeavored to induce the convention to adopt a constitution permitting slavery to be established in the new State. But the free-soil element triumphed, and California asked Congress to admit her as a free State. Yet, in spite of the fact that the vast majority of the people in California had voted against the introduction of the peculiar institution, Mr. Calhoun and his followers boldly conspired to plant slavery on their soil. Their action was all the more indefensible in view of their loud professions to be the champions of the old-fashioned Democratic doctrine of personal liberty. But while the leaders of the slave power at first proclaimed their intention of making California a slave State, they finally admitted among themselves their inability to accomplish their entire purpose, and planned to take California by the throat in order to effect a compromise from which they could gain some advantage. In brief, their ultimate hope was to force the anti-slavery party into an agreement whereby the Missouri Compromise line would be extended across the country to the Pacific slope. This would greatly increase the area of slavery, though taking only a part of California.

President Taylor's action was therefore awaited with great anxiety by the entire nation, for the initiative lay with him. He promptly acted, and in his first and only annual message to Congress he dealt

both the slave power and Mr. Calhoun a heavy blow by recommending the immediate admission of California as a free State, and the keeping of New Mexico under military government until it should be sufficiently populated to become a State. These were the chief features of the message; the other suggestions it contained need not be detailed. A circumstance that increased the anger of the slave party was that the President was himself a Southerner and a slaveholder. An incident that gave the message a bitter personal flavor was General Taylor's contemptuous treatment of Mr. Calhoun. It leaked out that the Great Nullifier had requested the President-elect, through the Secretary of State, Mr. Clayton, to make no references in his message to the fears he entertained for the safety of the Union. General Taylor's reply was to add a paragraph, in which he emphasized his apprehensions, and announced his intention of doing all within his power to maintain the integrity of the Union. When the slave party took in the full significance of the President's message, Congress became a volcano of wrath, and a veritable battle between giants was begun over the direct issue of the restriction or extension of slavery, when Henry Clay came forward with his famous compromise measures, and changed the course of events.

Clay was profoundly alarmed over the fierce struggle that was raging in Congress, and he returned to the Senate with the hope that he might prevent a crisis by effecting a compromise over the questions at issue. He came in the rôle of a peacemaker, and his knowledge of the fact that his own end was not far distant gave unwonted solemnity and earnestness to his efforts. He knew that he was engaged in his last great life's work, and that personally he had no material reward to hope for. His mission was honorable, disinterested, and eminently patriotic. He sincerely believed that he could divert the danger of disunion, and perhaps settle the slavery question on a basis where it might work out a peaceful solution. But the salvation of the Union was his paramount object, and it was in this spirit that he offered his compromise measures. These, in brief, provided for the admission of California; the organization of government in the remaining territory acquired from Mexico; adjustment of the disputed boundary of Texas, and the allowance of \$10,000,000 to that State for the payment of her debt; the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia; more effectual provisions for the recovery of fugitive slaves. Mr. Clay's measures of compromise not only at first provoked a heated controversy, but also caused a serious breach in his own party. President Taylor vehemently opposed Mr. Clay's plan and the Southern extremists. Mr. Calhoun's last speech, which was read for him in the Senate, rejected the Clay compromise proposition, and predicted the coming of disunion. Benton threw his powerful

weight against Clay ; Webster was for compromise. The President remained firm, and a deadlock between Congress and the Executive now seemed imminent.

As the debate waxed fiercer, the radical side of Mr. Hamlin's nature became more noticeable, and the causes are of personal and historical interest. During the five years Mr. Hamlin had been in Congress, he had steadily opposed the encroachments of the slave power, and with great mortification he had seen it increase the area of slavery through alliances with Northern congressmen. He repudiated the Clay compromise bill, because he was unwilling to compromise his principles, and also because he believed that the time had come when the anti-slavery people should make a supreme effort to drive the slave party away from free soil, even if the disunion element should attempt ultimate measures. On general principles, Mr. Hamlin had little faith in "the glue of compromise ;" the Clay compromise measures he regarded as bad and dangerous ; the proposed fugitive slave law<sup>1</sup> was to him an atrocious thing, and he would have opposed the omnibus bill on that account alone. But the main consideration with Mr. Hamlin now was the necessity of making a final stand against the enemy, even if it provoked a crisis.

There is a glimpse revealed of his heart-felt grievances in the following letter he wrote William P. Haines on May 4, 1849 :—

"I thank you most truly for your kind appreciation of my course during the brief time I have held a place in the Senate. I feel the importance of the position, and it shall be my anxious effort to pursue that course which shall be neither *rash* nor *diffident* upon the slavery question. I can only say that my course is taken and will be adhered to, come weal or woe to me. . . . I will resist firmly but not factiously the extension of human slavery into regions where it does not now exist. Your generous approval is cheering, and the more so because I have at times felt a terrible pressure upon me in my official position. . . .

"This troublesome question might have been settled long ago if the North had honestly and firmly represented, through the press and public servants, the sentiment of her people. *The South was ready to acquiesce*. But, alas ! the patronage of the government was thrown into the contest. . . . Many Northern men surrendered the right in order to 'stand well at headquarters.' . . . But I still look to the future, with faith and confidence that the right will triumph over the wrong, and that we and those who come after us shall rejoice in the consummation of correct principles. So may God in his mercy order it.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin, John P. Hale, William H. Seward, and other anti-slavery senators did not vote on this measure. Mr. Hamlin was paired, and undoubtedly the others were. The *Congressional Globe* did not record pairs at that time. Mr. Hamlin's opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law was known through his speeches, and his pair was understood.



"We have had rich times here. Moral treason, blustering, and gasconade have been the Southern staple. Within the past week some severe rebukes have been given in the Senate by Clay and by some men in the House. A different temper is plainly manifest. The result will be that the North will not be frightened by the utterance of such stuff, and those who talk of disunion as flippantly as schoolgirls will regret and repent of their course. We have had one dissolution convention<sup>1</sup> at the North, and those who engaged in it acquired an infamy that still clings to them. Those at the South who pursue the same course will meet with the same fate.

"Well, I like Henry Clay! He is a bold man. I like him for that. He is an honest man in my opinion. The rebukes which he gave Foote were well timed. He is an anti-slavery man at heart, and really I believe he would be an Abolitionist at the North. He goes as far as he can now. . . . California will come in and no mistake! . . . On the admission of California I rather think you may hear from me."

Although Senator Hamlin was politically opposed to President Taylor, and favored an aggressive anti-slavery policy, nevertheless circumstances brought him close to the President, and enabled him to gauge "Old Rough-and-Ready" at his true worth. Mr. Hamlin was first called to the White House on executive business connected with the Senate, and it appears that President Taylor and he liked each other's prompt way of transacting business. It would also appear that the President in these interviews revealed to Mr. Hamlin a more intimate knowledge of public men and affairs than it was supposed he possessed. After Mr. Hamlin had had several conferences with President Taylor, he was surprised one day by receiving a peremptory summons to come to the White House. When Mr. Hamlin presented himself, the President, without any preliminary remarks, proceeded to address him in his blunt, characteristic way as follows:—

"Senator Hamlin, I know you to be an honest man. You and I don't belong to the same party, but I know you well enough now to believe that you will give your President your honest advice for his own good when he asks it. Now the Whigs in Maine are disputing over the patronage, and I want you to tell me who are the best men to appoint."

"Yes, sir, you are my President," replied Mr. Hamlin laughingly, "and as a good citizen of this republic I will cheerfully and gladly obey your orders, even in assisting you to settle family quarrels in your party."

"Good!" said "Old Rough-and-Ready" with a laugh, and then clasping his hands behind his back, and tilting his head to one side, he began to pace up and down the room, discussing the various candidates for office in Maine who had been presented to him. President Taylor would discuss the candidates like this:—

<sup>1</sup> The Hartford convention.

"What do you think of this man? Isn't honest? Then I won't appoint him. What do you think of that man? Isn't a good Whig? Then I won't appoint him. These men you say are honest and competent? Then I will send their names to the Senate."

This occurred within a short time after Congress had convened, in December, 1849, when the debate over California was beginning. Not long afterwards, and before Mr. Hamlin had made a public declaration of his opinions on the Clay compromises, he received another imperative summons from the President. Then a dramatic incident occurred that suggests what might have happened if General Taylor had lived out his term, and also explains why Union men like Mr. Hamlin had supreme faith in him. As Mr. Hamlin was entering the White House he almost ran into Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens, and Thomas L. Clingman, who were still leaders in the House, and were now high priests in the inner councils of the slave power. They came hurriedly out of the President's room with angry looks on their faces and talking in loud voices. They had every appearance of being thoroughly enraged, and they were so engrossed in denouncing some one that they did not see Mr. Hamlin at first. When they looked up and recognized him they started, and one of them said sharply: "What are you doing here?"

Mr. Hamlin was surprised, but his feelings were turned to amazement when he was forthwith admitted to the President's room and saw the chief magistrate of the nation apparently unable to control himself. "General Taylor," to quote Mr. Hamlin's words, "was rushing around the room like a caged lion;" his face was almost livid with anger; he was fiercely muttering to himself and shaking his fist at imaginary foes. He was so completely carried away by his feelings that he passed Mr. Hamlin three or four times without noticing him. But when President Taylor saw Mr. Hamlin he stopped with a start, and then rushing up to him, asked, —

"Did you see those damned traitors? They have been making demands concerning my administration, and threatened that unless they were acceded to the South would secede. But if there are any such treasonable demonstrations on the part of the Southern leaders, I will hang them; — — — them, I will hang them as high as I hung spies in Mexico, and I will put down any treasonable movement with the whole power of the government, if I have to put myself at the head of the army to do it."

"Mr. Hamlin, what are you doing in the Senate with the omnibus bill?"

"Mr. President," replied Mr. Hamlin, "I believe the bill wrong in principle, and am doing what I can to defeat it."

"That is right," rejoined President Taylor, his excitement breaking

out again ; "stand firm ; don't yield ; it means disunion, and I am pained to learn that we have disunion men among us. Disunion is treason ; and if the disunionists attempt to carry out their schemes while I am President, I will hang them." <sup>1</sup>

Taylor was in no mood to transact the business for which he had sent for Mr. Hamlin, and the latter, perceiving it, quickly withdrew, after warmly commending the President for his firmness, and expressing his own opinion of the actions of the disunionists. As Mr. Hamlin was coming out of the White House, he met Thurlow Weed, of New York,<sup>2</sup> one of the powers of the Whig party. Mr. Weed was close to General Taylor, and Mr. Hamlin, knowing that, stopped long enough to tell him that he would find him greatly agitated. Mr. Weed at once hurried to the President's room and found him still excited. He repeated to Mr. Weed what he had told Mr. Hamlin, in almost the same language, assuring Mr. Weed of his intention to check any disunion movement that might be set on foot while he was President. Then President Taylor added some

<sup>1</sup> Condensed accounts of this incident are published in Wilson's *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, vol. ii. p. 529, and Thurlow Weed's *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> Thurlow Weed wrote Mr. Hamlin as follows : —

NEW YORK, Aug. 8th, 1876.

DEAR MR. HAMLIN, — You will have seen, I suppose, that Messrs. Stephens and Toombs deny that there was a stormy interview between themselves and General Taylor on the occasion to which I referred in a letter to the *Herald*. In my reply to Mr. Stephens (which I hope you saw), I found evidence that both gentlemen made disunion speeches on the subject and the occasion in question. And in reply to Mr. Stephens's statement that he and his colleague (Mr. Toombs) "favored the admission of California," I proved by the record that Mr. Toombs voted against such admission, and that Mr. Stephens was absent or did not vote.

I think that Mr. Stephens and Toombs base their denial on the ground that they did not require General Taylor to veto a bill that had not passed. Mr. Toombs says that he and Mr. Stephens had "earnest" conversations with General Taylor about the policy of his administration. That policy, you will remember, had been enunciated in an executive message.

You met Messrs. Stephens, Toombs, and Clingman coming out of the White House. I met them passing from the house to the avenue. You saw General Taylor before I did. Will you favor me with your recollection of what General Taylor said to you on that occasion, that I may make your letter a part of my response to Mr. Stephens.

The struggle between freedom and slavery during that session of Congress was the "beginning of the end." Had General Taylor lived, the "Compromise Measures," including the atrocious Fugitive Slave Law, would have encountered a veto. That might have precipitated the rebellion. You and I know with what devoted courage and patriotism General Taylor would have stood by the Union.

The presidential ticket unites all phases and shades of opposition to bogus Democracy in this State, supplemented by a good state ticket. New York may be "scored" for Hayes and Wheeler.

Very truly yours,

THURLOW WEED.



information that was of peculiar interest in the light of subsequent events.<sup>1</sup> He said that the ultra members of Congress from the Southern States had presumed on his acquiescence in their views because he was a Southern man and a slaveholder; that before he had been placed in a position that made it his duty to examine both sides of the question, he had entertained and expressed views differing widely from his then sentiments. Relying on the assurances of distinguished Southern statesmen that the North was "aggressive," and that the compromises of the Constitution were in danger, he had written a letter to his son-in-law, Jefferson Davis, saying that he was ready to stand with the South in maintaining all the guarantees of the Constitution; but that since it had become his duty to look carefully into the merits of the controversy, he had satisfied himself that the exactions and purposes of the South were intolerant and revolutionary. He added that he regarded Davis as the chief conspirator in the scheme which Toombs, Clingman, and Stephens had enunciated.

In a letter to Mr. Weed, General A. Pleasanton presented some significant testimony that throws further light on President Taylor's feelings about the disunion element and the measures he proposed to adopt to check it. General Pleasanton served under General Taylor in the Mexican war, and when ordered, in June, 1850, to rejoin his command in New Mexico called on the President, who said to him, —

"I am glad you are going to New Mexico. I want officers of judgment and experience there. These Southern men in Congress are trying to bring on a civil war. They are now organizing a military force in Texas for the purpose of taking possession of New Mexico and annexing it to Texas, and I have ordered the troops in New Mexico to be reinforced, and directed that no armed force from Texas be permitted to go into that territory. Tell Colonel Monroe" (commanding in New Mexico) "that he has my entire confidence, and if he has not force enough to support him" (and then his features assumed the firmest and most determined expression) "I will be with you myself; but I will be there before those people shall go into that country to have a foot of that territory. The whole business is infamous and must be put down."

Mr. Hamlin paid as close attention as he could to the California question, from its inception in the previous session of Congress until its settlement in this session. He took no part in the debate, however, until it was prolonged into March, when he arose to speak, chiefly for the purpose of exposing the tortuous line of argument the Southern senators had pursued, and the glaring inconsistency of their course. It must be admitted that although the Southern senators were on the

<sup>1</sup> See *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*, by James Ford Rhodes, vol. i. p. 134.

wrong side of the California question, they nevertheless made the most of a poor case. The debate from day to day was a brilliant contest between brilliant men, but in its entirety the Southern argument against the admission of California was an extraordinary record of inconsistency and bold quibbling. The slave power tore California from Mexico to make a new slave State, and when her people organized a free state government, the slave party would have denied California admission for the alleged reasons that it would not be lawful to admit California, because Congress had not granted her permission to form a constitution ; that aliens had voted at the election when the people of California proposed to organize a state government ; that there was not a sufficiently large population to warrant Congress to give California statehood, and also that the territory of California was too large for a State.

These claims Mr. Hamlin answered by the facts of history. Up to the time of the debate more States had been admitted to the Union without an enabling act of Congress, and it was also shown that no objection had been raised to the admission of Texas and other States on the score of an alleged insufficient population, or undue extent of territory, or voting of aliens. But whenever beaten on these lines, the Southern senators would return with greater vehemence to the general plea that slavery should be extended to California, to "preserve the equality of the States," and also to "maintain the principle of non-intervention." Now, while the senators who were fighting the slave party undoubtedly had the better of the argument, it nevertheless appears from a careful reading of their speeches that they failed to see the fundamental flaw in the slave party's attitude towards California ; if they did see it, they did not take advantage of their opportunity to place their opponents in an embarrassing position. Mr. Hamlin observed this flaw, and on March 5, 1850, the day after Mr. Calhoun's last speech was heard in the Senate, he took the floor to show the slave party that it had forgotten one important fact, that California was applying for admission into the Union under precisely the very conditions the slavery leaders, including Mr. Calhoun, had laid down the year before.

Mr. Hamlin's speech was widely commented on in the newspaper press, and in several New England publications little pictures of the scene that was presented form an interesting preface to Mr. Hamlin's remarks. His style and manner of speech-making had considerably changed from the time he entered the House at thirty-three, fresh from the farm and country courts, with defects in style pardonable in one who had had an incomplete education. He spoke in a plainly worded way with the evident purpose of making a very complicated problem clear to the average understanding. One corre-

spondent, commenting on Mr. Hamlin's simple method of speech-making, wrote: "The argument was clear and luminous throughout, and showed that Mr. Hamlin was not only a master of the subject, but had authentic facts and evidence to prove his position. It was decidedly the most logical and forcible argument that I have heard or read on this side of the question, and amounted to a demonstration that California ought to be admitted without unnecessary delay. These manly and patriotic sentiments, though unsavory to some of the ultra Southern members, were pronounced in such a spirit of courtesy and good taste as to conciliate rather than to offend, cannot fail to have a good effect in settling the great question amicably for the best interests of the country. . . . Mr. Hamlin was listened to with profound attention from all parts of the House. This speech will place him on lofty ground as a statesman of enlarged and comprehensive views, worthy of the confidence of the nation."

Another correspondent wrote: "The Southern members were unusually restive under his remarks, and with their accustomed courtesy interrupted Mr. Hamlin with interrogatories, until, finding him armed at all points and a little too caustic for their comfort, they concluded to submit to their chastisement with as good a grace as they could. . . . Mr. Hamlin's friends are jubilant. I understand they at once subscribed for five thousand copies for public circulation."

In opening his remarks, Mr. Hamlin maintained that there should be only one subject before the Senate in the current debate, and that was the admission of California into the Union. He commented, in passing, on the unparalleled opposition which had been offered to California, and enumerated the irrelevant subjects that had been brought into discussion, — slavery, the formation of territorial governments, and the boundary of Texas. He said these questions should be legitimately submitted to the Senate for action in their proper places, and that they should not be permitted to delay the admission of California into the Union. He reminded the Senate that the people of California had rights, and they asked no entangling alliances. Mr. Hamlin was therefore opposed to submitting all these questions to the special committee appointed at Mr. Clay's request, and favored referring the California question to the proper committee in accordance with Colonel Benton's plan, with instructions to disconnect all unrelated subjects, that the Senate might then act only on the admission of California.

But while Mr. Hamlin desired to pursue the main theme of his argument, he paused to rebuke the cry of disunion which had been raised during the debate, and to charge point-blank that the purpose was to frighten the country into a state of alarm wherein the conspirators hoped they might accomplish their objects. "There need



be no alarm," said Mr. Hamlin; "this Union will stand as a monument of grandeur, glory, and greatness long after every senator here shall have crumbled into dust. The affections of our people will cling to it and sustain it in spite of the madness of party and politicians."

Mr. Hamlin then proceeded to the real question, "whether a new sister State should be added to the Union." He examined first the rights of the people of California to form a constitution, and next the duty of Congress, in order to answer the quibbles of the slave party that the people of California had no right to erect a state government without a preliminary permission from Congress. Mr. Hamlin asserted that the people of California had proceeded in the right way, and he showed that they had acted in accordance with precedent, and had not violated the Constitution. He demonstrated, moreover, that the initiative in organizing a state government resided in the people of a territory, and that it was only within the jurisdiction of Congress to act upon the admission of a State. Article four, section three, of the Constitution says: "New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union," which means that Congress cannot "create" a State. Mr. Hamlin pursued this line farther to show that the Constitution was not only silent as to the power of creating a State, but that the constitutional convention did not even consider such a question. Madison, in the forty-third number of the "Federalist," wrote, "The eventual establishment of new States seems to have been overlooked by the framers of the instrument (the Constitution)."

In connection with this, and before citing his precedents in support of California's action, Mr. Hamlin embarrassed the pro-slavery senators by reading them their own opinions on the power of Congress in the matter of "creating States," as expressed by the Judiciary Committee at the previous session of the Senate, when the question of admitting California first arose. This opinion was delivered by Senator Berrien, of Georgia, who was now opposing the admission of California, and it was in part as follows: "The power conferred by the Constitution on Congress is to admit new States, not to create them. According to the theory of our government, the creation of a State is an act of popular sovereignty, not by ordinary legislation. It is by the will of the people of whom the State is composed, assembled in convention, that it is created." Mr. Hamlin emphasized his advantage by expressing his belief that this opinion was a doctrine to which he subscribed, because it was the doctrine of the Constitution.

The fact must be borne in mind that the year before the anti-slavery senators proposed to authorize California to erect a state government, and the pro-slavery senators checkmated them by asserting, through the Judiciary Committee, that the people of California

should take the lead. Their private reason was that the slave power was making desperate efforts to carry the territorial election in California and put a pro-slavery clause in her constitution. But now that this effort had been defeated and the situation changed, Judge Berrien and his friends did not enjoy the grim irony of fate. To admit that the opinion of the Judiciary Committee was good doctrine now was to admit that California had fulfilled all requirements for admission, and that those who were opposing her admission stultified themselves by so doing. Judge Berrien was in the worst plight of all the pro-slavery senators, because he was responsible for the advantage Mr. Hamlin had. He interrupted Mr. Hamlin precipitately, and propounded an evasive question which "ran up a squirrel track."

"Is it the purpose of the senator," he asked, "to deduce from that report the inference that it was the opinion of the Judiciary Committee that it belonged to the territories, without the sanction of Congress, to erect themselves into States? If so, he misunderstands that report. The sovereignties, in the view of that committee, only become incipient with the authorization of Congress to form a constitution. When that authorization is obtained, then, and not until then, the territory can proceed to act in the erection of a State and the formation of a government and constitution."

Mr. Hamlin replied: "I do not think that there was any necessity for the honorable senator from Georgia to interrupt me. I speak in all kindness. I was not speaking of the power of the territory to erect a territorial or a state government, whether authorized by Congress or not, but of the power of Congress to create a state government. I quoted the report made by the senator from Georgia for that and no other purpose; but, taking the language of that report, I must be permitted to declare that I find in it no such explanation as that which the senator has just now seen fit to give us. It is undoubtedly right for the senator from Georgia to make any explanation he may now deem fit; but the report itself nowhere affirms or denies the power of the people of the territories to erect themselves into a State without the previous assent of Congress; nor does it claim that such assent must be given. That belongs to the explanation of the senator from Georgia."

Senator Berrien replied: "That was not the question before the committee. It was, whether an unauthorized body could erect a State."

This was a palpable evasion of the point at issue, and Mr. Hamlin answered: —

"That report has been quoted for the purpose I have already stated; but I propose to inquire into the very point which the senator from Georgia has suggested in his interruption.

"My first proposition is that Congress has not the power to create a State. My second, that the people of this territory of California have. Congress having failed to make a territorial government for the people of

California, it is clearly within the power of the people inhabiting that territory to create a state government, as they have already done, to present their constitution here and ask to be admitted as one of the sovereign States. They are the persons to act, not we; they are the persons more directly interested, and who have the power. California has acted from right as well as from necessity. . . . We have been told in these halls that we have no power to create a territorial government. That is one doctrine. Another is, now, that the people of the territory have no power to erect themselves into a State. Taking both propositions, and presenting them to the people of a territory, we may ask in what manner can they institute a state government? Or in what manner can they become a part of this Union? We speak, sir, in just praise of the character of our country, — its influence upon other nations and other people; but to my mind there is no single feature in all our government better calculated to spread abroad its true character, — there is no incident in the history of our people, our government, of which we may be more justly proud, — than the institution of this government in California among a people assembled there from every State of the Union, virtually without law.

“And when it was declared that the bowie knife and the revolver would be the common law of the land, they, in obedience to the . . . lessons of civil government, and the rights of which they had learned while citizens of the States, — they assembled themselves together, and from the existing necessity erected themselves into a State. . . . No other people on the face of this globe thus brought together, save those who have been educated in our States, . . . would have thus formed themselves into a State. . . . Without that education and training they received in the States, the bowie knife and the revolver would have been the common law of their land. It is, indeed, a sublime spectacle to witness the order and deportment of these people. It should excite a just pride in every breast, and create a living faith in the capacity of man for self-government.

“Now, sir, I hold that the people of that territory have by the law of nature, by that law which God gave to man, a right to form themselves into a government for the protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our government is based upon that right; its foundations are laid deep and broad upon that principle. It was the assertion of that principle, — the right of the people to self-government, the right to institute a government to suit themselves, a government to protect their lives, liberty, and property, — it was in recognition of that principle that the first blood of the Revolution fertilized the soil of Lexington. It was in recognition of that principle that the declaration of 1776 was signed. It was in recognition of that principle that this government was reared . . . and is this day sustained. . . .

“Sir, allow me to read from the Declaration of Independence: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers



from the consent of the governed ; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government.' . . .

"It is too late to controvert these doctrines. . . . They have been incorporated as the fundamental principle of the State. The senator from Alabama (Clement C. Clay, Jr.), if I understood him the other day, controverted and denied these propositions. Allow me to read from the Constitution of Alabama: 'All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their benefit; and, therefore, they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or *abolish* their form of government in such manner as they may think expedient' (Mr. Hamlin emphasized the word 'abolish' in order to show Southern authority for the course the people of California had in abolishing the military government that had been established in their territory in order to form a state government).

"I will also read from the Constitutions of Arkansas and Maine: 'All power is inherent in the people. . . . They have at all times an unqualified right to alter, reform, or abolish their governments in such manner as they think proper'—Constitution of Arkansas. 'All power is inherent in the people. . . . They have, therefore, an unalienable and indefeasible right to institute government, to alter, reform, or totally change the same, when their safety and happiness require it,'—Constitution of Maine.

"Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Michigan, Florida, Wisconsin, Iowa, and other States affirm the same sovereign and unlimited capacity of the people to form their constitutions. Now, we are told that the people of California, having been denied by Congress any government, have no right to erect themselves into a State. The right of a people to form a State in such a case is a proposition which I do not see fit to argue. . . . I prefer rather to give authorities and precedents."

Mr. Hamlin next patiently reviewed the charge that President Taylor had interfered in the California election, and had inspired General Riley, the military governor of the territory, to take the lead in calling a state convention. This charge was trivial, almost frivolous, and the fact that the slave party should press it shows how it grasped at straws. The immense activity the people of California manifested in organizing a state government evidenced a spontaneous desire to make California a State. When Mr. Hamlin showed how vague and conflicting the evidence of executive interference was, Senator King, of Alabama, and Senator Downs, of Louisiana, interrupted to interpose their inferences and hearsay evidence—no facts. But Mr. Hamlin was armed at these points; he produced General Riley's proclamation, and the correspondence of Thomas Butler King, which proved that General Riley had issued his proclamation long after the people of California had called their primary meetings, and before Mr. King

arrived in California,—the first man to go to that territory from Washington after General Taylor had become President, and himself an agent of the slave power! There were no more questions or interruptions from the Southern senators on this score, and Mr. Hamlin took up the next point.

This was the claim that the constitutional election in California was void on the grounds that aliens had voted. Mr. Hamlin not only demonstrated that, under the treaty with Mexico, Mexicans who chose to live in California were to be regarded as American citizens and therefore had a right to vote, but that it was the custom among the territories in forming state governments to allow alien citizens to cast their ballots. He produced voluminous evidence to establish this fact, mentioning the cases of Maine, Illinois, and Michigan, without comment or criticism; but he took occasion to say in passing, that this was a question which the territories should decide, and had decided, for themselves; it was the first time he had heard it raised in Congress, when objection was made to the custom.

Mr. Hamlin turned now to review the history of numerous States which had organized their respective governments without the permission of Congress, and had been admitted into the Union. There were nine,—Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maine, Arkansas, Michigan, Florida, Texas, and Iowa. Eight had been admitted with a previous act of Congress, and thus the rule up to the present sanctioned the act of California. Mr. Hamlin in connection with this briefly cited the facts in the case of the nine States; and his remarks on the action of Tennessee were of special interest. John C. Calhoun, in his speech the day before, had asserted that Tennessee had applied for admission to the Union without the permissive act of Congress, and for that reason had been remanded back to a territorial condition. Mr. Calhoun claimed that California afforded a parallel case, and argued that on this account Congress should deny her admission.

Mr. Hamlin took sharp issue with Mr. Calhoun, and by reciting the historical facts proved that Mr. Calhoun had made an egregious blunder. Mr. Hamlin stated that Tennessee was ceded to the United States by North Carolina, with the provision that she should be admitted to the Union when she had a population of sixty thousand inhabitants. That condition was fulfilled in 1796, and Tennessee, forming a constitution and fixing her own boundary without the consent of Congress, applied for admission into the Union. The Constitution was presented to the Senate accompanied by a message from the President. Both these circumstances occurred in the case of California. A committee from the Senate recommended that Tennessee be remanded back to a territorial condition inasmuch as there had been no

census taken by the government in that territory, and also because Congress had not yet decided how many States should be made out of Tennessee. But the House refused to concur in this action, the Senate receded from its position, and Tennessee was brought into the Union.

The most interesting thrust Mr. Hamlin made at Mr. Calhoun was in reading the following extract from the latter's speech of February, 1849: "Sir, I hold it to be a fundamental principle of our political system, that the people have a right to establish what government they may think proper for themselves; that every State about to become a member of this Union has a right to form its government as it pleases; and that, in order to be admitted, there is but one qualification, and that is the government shall be republican. There is no express provision to that effect, but it results from that important section which guarantees to every State in this Union a republican form of government."

In commenting on Mr. Calhoun's change of position, Mr. Hamlin said that he had encouraged the people to go to California to do the very thing they had done. He added that he could continue to quote until the sun went down from Southern statesmen, orators, and newspapers, who professed their willingness to leave this question of slavery to the people of the territory. After having encouraged the people of California to take this step, it was too late to resist the admission of their State.

One of the most transparent objections raised to California was that her territory was too large for one State. Mr. Hamlin turned this objection to advantage by asking the Southern senators why they had not protested against the admission of Texas on the same score. No complaints or objections against Texas on account of her size were even heard, and yet if the boundaries of Texas, which were in dispute, should be compressed into their narrowest limits, Texas would yet remain larger than California, and be able to support a population ten times larger. As to the charge that California had an insufficient population, Mr. Hamlin asked why Mr. Clay, of Alabama, had passed over the case of Florida, which had less than 50,000 inhabitants when she applied for admission; and he also asked why objections were not made to Texas on the same score, when she sought entrance into the Union with a population of about 80,000. California, from reliable information, had a population of from 110,000 to 120,000, and it was increasing with astonishing rapidity.

In closing, Mr. Hamlin briefly declared that the facts of the case warranted the immediate admission of California, and that he thought there was only one question to be determined, and that was whether the Constitution presented was republican. He believed that it was,



and that it was evidence of the character of her people, who were worthy and intelligent men who had gone to their new home to build up a republic and make it one of the marts of commerce which shall connect us with the distant East. "They have gone there and asserted their rights as citizens," Mr. Hamlin concluded, "and have come here asking us to admit them into this Union. That, sir, is the real question for our decision, and I have no doubt that California is to be welcomed into this Union, and that her star is to stud with other stars our national flag."

Of the numerous comments on Mr. Hamlin's speech, the following from the Washington correspondence of the "New York Evening Post," William Cullen Bryant, editor, is selected to show the effect of the speech on the anti-slavery press and people of the times : —

"Mr. Hamlin addressed the Senate at length, and made one of the most able and eloquent pleas for the immediate unconditional admission of California yet heard in either branch of Congress. Mr. Hamlin took an early occasion to correct Mr. Calhoun in his misstatement of facts yesterday, but Mr. Calhoun did not think it expedient to defend his own assertions, though they were not yet a day old ; and it was very remarkable that when Mr. Hamlin contradicted Mr. Calhoun's statement respecting the admission of Tennessee, neither of the senators from that State saw fit to sustain the South Carolina senator.

"Mr. Hamlin showed, by a mass of evidence that cannot be evaded or resisted, that neither the present nor the late administration had exerted any influence to prevent the adoption of the anti-slavery clause of the Constitution (of California), and he took the last plank from beneath the feet of his opponents by quoting from their own previous declarations to prove that California now presented herself for admission under the very conditions which they themselves prescribed a year ago.

"I own I was surprised to see him catch even Mr. Calhoun in this awkward predicament. Following Mr. Calhoun through his tortuous career on these territorial questions, he brought to the attention of the Senate a paragraph from a speech of his in February, 1849, in which he declared himself ready to receive California with open arms and clasp her to his heart, when her own people came here with institutions established by their own free will and congenial to their ideas and wishes, provided only her government was republican in form.

"Upon the whole, I consider this speech of the senator from Maine one of the most satisfactory refutations yet delivered of the special pleadings by which it is sought now to exclude California. As an argument it covers the whole ground, and seems to me unanswerable. Mr. Hamlin has established by his effort of to-day a reputation of one of the first debaters in the Senate."

William Pitt Fessenden, then preparing to enter public life, wrote to Mr. Hamlin : —

"I congratulate you on your speech, which is highly spoken of, and which I have read, so far as it has appeared in the 'Argus.' I like it very much. It gives much better satisfaction to men of all parties here than Mr. Webster's. If you have a copy to spare, I should like much to receive one."

The next speech the Senate heard was one of momentous interest. This was Webster's memorable 7th of March speech. The great expounder was filled with fear, and he launched his thunder not at the slavery propagandists, but at the abolitionists and the anti-slavery people; he held them responsible for the agitation, and he supported the Clay compromise measures as the surest means of saving the Union from the danger that threatened it. Webster's speech fell on the opponents of slavery extension like a clap of thunder from the clear sky. They received it as a recantation of principle, the ruin of a noble career, and the turning back of the hands on the clock of time. In their sore grief they charged Webster with bidding for Southern support for the presidency. Old friends fell away from him; and yet the effect of his speech was to turn Northern sentiment towards compromise. Webster's sun went down, and his defeat for the presidency in 1852 probably broke his heart.

This speech is of both historical and personal interest to these pages. It is to be noted that Webster, in the course of his remarks, took occasion to refer to Mr. Hamlin's speech on California, and also to compliment him on his opposition to the annexation of Texas. But there was little in common between the two men, and their relations were purely functionary. Then, again, Webster was a Whig, and had been long in public life, while Mr. Hamlin was comparatively a beginner. Yet Mr. Hamlin's opinions of Webster and his course at this juncture are interesting. In the main he coincided in the latter-day verdict that Webster was influenced almost wholly by patriotic motives. His passion was his overwhelming love for the Union, and his great mind clearly saw the conflict impending that broke only ten years later. He wished to avert it; he feared strife; he could not take the public entirely into his fears without incurring the danger of precipitating a crisis. He deliberately imperiled his great name and fame in what he sincerely believed to be a patriotic cause. His paramount object was the salvation of the nation; all else, even his own career, was subsidiary.

But while Mr. Hamlin at the time of Webster's departure recognized his main motive, he nevertheless was of the opinion that he erred. He criticised Webster's lack of courage to meet the emergency with firmness, and place the responsibility where a Southern President and slaveholder said it belonged. Mr. Hamlin also criticised Webster's morals. He always severely reflected on his loose

financial habits, and his notion that it was right for him to advocate private bills in the Senate for pay. "A man," said Mr. Hamlin, "who is careless about money matters cannot always be honest." But he rarely failed, out of his sense of justice, to mitigate his criticism of Webster by praising his great life's work in expounding the Constitution, which, as has been happily said, "had the force of constitutional amendments."

The sudden death of General Taylor and the accession of Millard Fillmore to the presidency secured the success of the Clay compromise bill. It will probably always be a fascinating subject of speculation among historians as to the results of President Taylor's policy, had he lived to enforce it. It seems reasonable to conclude that his ability, courage, and military experience would have made him master of the situation. It is easy to see that Mr. Fillmore did not possess the strength and alertness necessary to meet an emergency similar to that which threatened General Taylor. Mr. Fillmore signed the Fugitive Slave Law, although he had been identified with the anti-slavery wing of the Whig party, and for that reason was nominated for Vice-President. Later generations that can have no partisan feelings about this probably will extend to Mr. Fillmore the same consideration they extend to his counselor, Daniel Webster. This generous view of the case would at least incline them to believe that it was Mr. Fillmore's natural conservatism, timidity, and lack of strength which governed him in his course rather than personal ambition. But whatever were his motives, the facts remain that he was not called on to meet the crisis, and that the Fugitive Slave Law, for which he was partially responsible, became a great factor in educating the masses of the North against the iniquities and horrors of slavery. It was reserved for another man to appear when the hour of action arrived. Mr. Hamlin spoke of Mr. Fillmore personally as a clean, upright, dignified man, of an imposing presence and naturally genial disposition. His mental habits were somewhat sluggish, but he was a man of ability, and with the exception of his course towards the compromises of 1850 gave the country a good administration.

One more incident remains to be related in connection with Mr. Hamlin's work in this session of Congress, which closed his first term as a senator. A movement was in progress to abolish the brutal custom of flogging that still existed in the navy. John P. Hale was the foremost leader in Congress in this move, and Mr. Hamlin heartily coöperated with him. There was decided opposition. The general objection against abolishing flogging was the plea that the officers of the navy favored it. There were also senators who maintained that Congress had no right to interfere with the discipline of the navy. Mr. Hamlin rejected both these arguments. He favored the abolish-



ment of flogging on humane principles, and also because he had obtained authoritative information that in the opinion of the most intelligent and efficient officers of the navy this mode of punishment was detrimental to the service. One of his authorities was the Rev. Walter Colton, who had been for many years a chaplain in the navy, and was a writer of considerable popularity in his day. Mr. Colton had served under Commodore R. H. Stockton, and these two were prime movers in this humane crusade against a barbarous cruelty.

Mr. Hamlin made a brief speech in answer to Yulee, of Florida, and other Southern senators who opposed the abolishment of flogging. The main points he made were that flogging belonged to another age, that its abolition was desired by men of all creeds, religions, and politics, for humane reasons, and that to abolish flogging would make the sailor more of a man. Senator Dawson, of Georgia, interrupted Mr. Hamlin to assert that there was little sentiment in favor of the bill before Congress. Mr. Hamlin replied in amazement: "Well, the bill passed the House by a majority of 130, and I should think that that represented a sentiment. If it does not, then I should like to have the gentleman explain what it does mean or represent."

Nevertheless, the bill did not pass the Senate. A year or two afterwards Commodore Stockton entered the Senate, and by tacking a bill to abolish flogging in the navy as a rider on another measure, secured its passage. Then he resigned from the Senate.

## CHAPTER XX

### MR. HAMLIN'S WORK IN THE SENATE

THE tumult that the compromise measures of 1850 raised, subsided after their adoption. Congress was no longer an arena of wrath and wrangling, and a more moderate tone prevailed throughout the country. While the Fugitive Slave Law provoked indignation at the North, and served in itself to keep alive the agitation against slavery, yet, coming after the tempestuous times that accompanied the discussion and enactment of the Clay compromise plan, the period that followed, and preceded the breaking-down of the Missouri Compromise, was one of comparative quietude. But this was not strange. The North was governed by its commercial and manufacturing interests, and they were alarmed over the conflict the slavery question precipitated in Congress. Capital is proverbially timid. The moneyed interests of the North demanded a cessation of the strife. There were cotton Whigs and conscience Whigs, dough-face Democrats and anti-slavery Democrats. To use a common expression, money talked. The North might have lapsed into its former condition of cowardly indifference to slavery if the Fugitive Slave Law had not remained in force to prick its conscience. Both political parties professed their willingness to make a fair test of the compromise plan, and eventually the acceptance of the measures of 1850 became a test of party fealty in both great political organizations.

When it is borne in mind that the Missouri Compromise was repealed in 1854, through the efforts of conspirators, not through the movements of events, it is not strange that this comparatively peaceful interval misled some of the far-sighted statesmen of the day. It is easy to look back over the printed pages of history, and wonder, — but the infallible prophet had not yet arrived. While it may not be worth while to speculate on what would have happened if the slavery propagandists had let the Missouri Compromise alone, it is nevertheless interesting to note the attitude of some of the leading men of the country. The extreme hopeful view was expressed by Benton when he said to Charles Sumner: "You have come on the scene too late, sir. Not only have our great men passed away, but the great issues have been settled also. The last of these was the United States bank, and that has been overthrown forever. Nothing is left you,

sir, but puny sectional questions and petty strifes about slavery and fugitive slave laws, involving no national interests.”<sup>1</sup> Abraham Lincoln, who was already recognized as an anti-slavery leader of great prominence, said at this time that he was losing his interest in politics, and that it was not awakened until the attack on the Missouri Compromise was begun. John P. Hale, whose term in the Senate expired in 1853, left Washington, not to return to New Hampshire to resume his fight against slavery, but to go to New York to practice law in that metropolis.

Senator Hamlin did not subscribe to the optimistic view his friend Benton took, and more will be said on that point later ; but while he did not believe that the slavery question was settled by the compromise measures of 1850, he did not foresee or think the conflict would be so shortly renewed. His private letters, his words to his intimate friends and family, show that he was troubled in mind and brooded over the situation. His exact words on several occasions are recalled : “ This thing of slavery will sooner or later try to subvert the government, but I do not expect it will happen in my day.” In other words, while there were no clouds gathering on the political horizon, Mr. Hamlin yet felt that there were elements of a future storm brewing. He pointed out the conditions. Here was slavery ; it had proved itself to be a curse ; only evil had come out of it, and he held it to be a self-evident proposition that it would continue a source of trouble as long as it was allowed to exist. All the compromises in the world could not palliate its wickedness, and yet life was vouchsafed it by the Constitution. The Fugitive Slave Law was in his eyes an inhuman thing, and was certain to increase Northern repugnance to slavery. Two civilizations were growing up in the country and trending apart. How long could this go on ? This was the question that perplexed him.

The chief reason Senator Hamlin had for believing that the solution of the problem would not be reached in his day is another striking proof of his large faith in men and his strong belief in those whom he respected. He hoped that the slave party was now convinced that the North would not have the loathsome institution on its soil ; he trusted in the honor of Sam Houston, Jefferson Davis, Robert M. T. Hunter, Willie P. Mangum, John McPherson Berrien, George E. Badger, John Bell, John M. Clayton, Andrew P. Butler, Howell Cobb, and other Southern statesmen whom he respected, to abide by the law of the land and keep slavery a local institution. He did not believe in the fire-eaters, nor did he believe that they represented the South. Their threats of disunion were in his eyes the bluster and froth of vain, petulant, and overbearing men, and he ignored them.

<sup>1</sup> Ben : Perley Poore's *Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 409.



While there were many red-hot speeches in Congress on the slavery question during this interval of three years, they were of an intermittent nature, and Congress returned to its duty of attending to the regular business of the nation. A business era of vast importance to the United States had set in, and the best energies of the country were now enlisted to meet the requirements of the time. The discovery of gold in California marked an epoch in the development of our Western domains. Cities, towns, and hamlets sprang up on the Pacific slope as if by magic. Great plans were projected for establishing rapid communication between the East and the West by means of transcontinental railroad lines. Asa Whitney, of New York city, who projected in 1846 a railroad across the country, now found powerful supporters at Washington. Preparations for a war that broke out in the Crimea in 1853 stimulated our foreign trade. There was a tentative movement here and there to enlist the aid of the government in assisting the American manufacturers to find markets in South America for his products. Domestic trade and subsidiary interests were generally promoted. But it is designed only to outline the salient points in this era of development in order to give an idea of the duties that were now pressed on Congress and their effect on Mr. Hamlin. The story of his life now takes up a new phase of his career, and gives the keynote to his course of action during the remainder of his public life.

Mr. Hamlin became a business senator, and from choice. Personal ambition dictated another course. He might have enhanced his reputation by devoting himself to one or more subjects on which to make himself a special authority — such as slavery, the tariff, or the financial question. Many a senator or representative has achieved national prominence by making a specialty of one subject, although taking a low rank as a practical legislator. But Mr. Hamlin was indifferent about his fame. It may be repeated that he rarely wrote out a speech, and seldom was known to revise one. He disliked to talk about himself. In his later days his aversion for the newspaper interviewer was notorious. The truth is Mr. Hamlin's governing idea of life was that "one should do the duty that lies nearest." He was also a man of action rather than words, and when this great era of development began, he plunged into the business of the Senate, and accomplished results that are a story by themselves and a monument to his attention to his duties. This record in detail would prove dry reading, but it represents work that had to be done, and required close attention and an intimate knowledge of government and public affairs. Several subjects in connection with this will present themselves elsewhere.

Mr. Hamlin's election to the chairmanship of the Committee on

Commerce was undoubtedly a circumstance that contributed in a large measure to his development into a business senator. He was not quite thirty-nine when he entered the Senate, and during his second year he was elected chairman of this committee. His habits of life, characteristics, and public course had not yet been fully matured, and his new duties tended to awaken and strengthen his natural preference for action. The scope of the work devolving upon the Committee on Commerce embraced a vast field, and it was a more important arm of business for the government than now. The nature of its work was more largely creative than now; the rapid growth of the country constantly created new conditions that the committee had to meet. In brief, this committee was required to give its attention to shipping interests, the customs and revenue marine services, river and harbor improvements, the life-saving department, and coast survey. The chairmanship involved the personal supervision of an immense amount of detail. The incumbent was also chosen with regard to his ability and experience as a political manager, because there was much patronage connected with the post.

In a year or two after Mr. Hamlin had been chairman of the Committee on Commerce, a marked change took place in him; he became not only a business senator, but also a silent senator. This at first puzzled his friends, who had expected him to play a conspicuous part in the Senate's debates and discussions. In the House and state legislature he had been regarded as one of the most promising and forcible debaters and speakers in the Democratic party. He was often selected by his party managers in the House in preference to older and more experienced men to champion measures. His associates urged him to study the graces of oratory, for they thought that he could develop oratorical ability of a high order. It is not known whether Mr. Hamlin ever went to the trouble of studying a model. It is doubtful if he did. He was original, and disposed to be sparing of his words. It was the talkative nature of the legislature and House and the partisanship of his youth that impelled him to speak in those bodies rather than a desire to hear himself talk. When he became a member of the Senate, he found its dignified tone and deliberate method of procedure more to his liking. As his predilection for work was encouraged by circumstances, he was soon more active in the committee room than in the forum.

The congressional habit of talk was another factor of this change in Mr. Hamlin. The long speech was still in vogue among the senators, and it was no uncommon thing for one to take the larger part of two daily sessions to deliver a speech. When a senator's arguments, ideas, and position were pretty well known, reiteration somewhat palled on his colleagues. But some of the senators of this period

would have flowed on forever like Tennyson's brook if the transaction of public business had not held them in check. A reaction was setting in against the long-winded, ornate style of speech-making which had long prevailed. The death of Calhoun, Webster's entrance into the Cabinet, and the decline of Clay left few men in the Senate with the ability that justified the taking of a day of the Senate's time for the delivery of a speech. Mr. Hamlin grew impatient; his private letters and conversation resounded with an emphatic protest. "Congress talks too much" was the burden of his complaint, and he saw no reason to change his mind in the days of his retirement. Many amusing stories were related how Mr. Hamlin would retire from the Senate in great displeasure when a verbose senator took the floor to ramble for a couple of hours on his favorite theme, "His Majesty Myself," and check the transaction of public business.<sup>1</sup>

But while Senator Hamlin virtually withdrew from the political discussions in the Senate, he nevertheless participated in the debates on business affairs, and occasionally made set speeches when he thought that he ought to speak. He would sometimes rise to cut the knot of debate upon a question of order, for he was recognized as an authority on parliamentary procedure. There was a noticeable change in his style of speaking. His remarks on business matters were usually very brief, concise, exact, without a superfluous word; his speeches were modeled on the same plan, and presented facts marshaled in perfect order with little or no attempt to rise into flights of eloquence. His remarks in connection with the government reports, as they appear in the "Congressional Record," cover a wide range of topics; he dealt with these subjects as only a man could who was entitled to speak with authority and exact knowledge. Without going into detail now, it may be said that Professor Alexander D. Bache and Professor Joseph Henry regarded Mr. Hamlin as their most consistent and intelligent supporter in the Senate when they were engaged in developing the coast survey and lighthouse departments.

This general outline of Mr. Hamlin's work in the Senate and its effect on him would not be complete without the explanation of a seeming inconsistency in the narrative. While Mr. Hamlin was known

<sup>1</sup> Senator Hamlin once said that he agreed with the following sentiments which Bismarck expressed to his secretary, Dr. Busch, in 1871: "The gift of oratory has ruined much in parliamentary life. Time is wasted because every one who feels ability in that line must have his word, even if he has no new point to bring forward. Speaking is too much in the air, and too little to the point. Everything is already settled in committees; a man speaks, therefore, at length only for the public, to whom he wishes to show off as much as possible, and still more for the newspapers, who are to praise him. Oratory will, one day, come to be looked upon as a generally harmful quality, and a man will be punished who permits himself to be guilty of a long speech!"



to the end of his career at Washington as a silent senator, he yet became one of the most widely known campaign orators of his day. There is no contradiction or inconsistency. Mr. Hamlin early imbibed the idea that the Senate was a place for the transaction of public business. He also believed that a senator should give an account of himself to his constituents. Then, again, he was a born politician, and loved the excitement of a campaign. This overbore his natural modesty, which inclined him to remain in retirement, and for years he regularly took the stump in the service of his party when it needed him. The speeches that Mr. Hamlin made on the stump were simple in style, and always aimed at the level of popular understanding. He instinctively gauged that level, and that was one thing which gave him his hold on the masses of the people. He gave the rank and file of his party what they could carry, assimilate, and repeat, and no more. His ideas on this point are well expressed in Lincoln's advice to his partner, William H. Herndon: "Don't shoot too high; aim lower, and the common people will understand you. They are the ones you want to reach—at least the ones you ought to reach. The educated and refined people will understand you anyway. If you aim too high, your ideas will go over the heads of the masses, and only hit those who need no hitting."

It is clear that Mr. Hamlin was justified in pursuing this course. In Maine he always had the masses of the people with him, though his opponents might have the party machinery. He knew that it was one thing to deliver a finished speech, and that it was quite another to make one which would influence the masses. The necessity of keeping the slavery question, with its involved and rapidly changing phases, clear to the common people was a circumstance in itself that rendered it advisable for Mr. Hamlin, during his first years in the Senate, to speak to the twelfth man in the public jury. The result was that the voters of Maine always understood him, and kept him at Washington for over thirty years, without his expending one cent for other than legitimate purposes.

It is interesting now to note the kind of men with whom Mr. Hamlin was most intimately associated in the Senate during this period of work. They were preëminently workers. Prominent among them were Thomas H. Benton, Sam Houston, John Davis, Jefferson Davis, John Bell, Willie P. Mangum, George E. Badger, John McPherson Berrien, Solon Borland, of Arkansas, General Henry Dodge, of Wisconsin, and Alpheus Felch, of Michigan. The one with whom Senator Hamlin at this time sustained the closest personal and party relations was Benton, who was the father of the Senate and the most revered Jackson Democrat of the times. His noble and useful career in the Senate was now drawing to a close; yet, at no time in his long

and distinguished life had Benton more clearly revealed his true qualities as a pure patriot and wise statesman. A Southern man by birth, 'a slaveholder, too, he combated the Calhoun party with all his great power and force. The slave party succeeded in preventing his reelection to the Senate in 1850, after thirty years' service in that body ; but that was a Pyrrhic victory, and enhanced Benton's fame.

The measure of Benton's statesmanship is to be determined by the immense influence he exerted in the formative period of congressional legislation, by his honorable, wise, and aggressive leadership, his personal qualities of integrity, honor, moral courage, ample knowledge, and force. Thus, while Benton's name is not attached to specific acts of legislation as author, yet he was one of the great powers of his day. He was identified with many measures of vast importance, and through his management was entitled to a large share of credit for their success. He was Jackson's right-hand man in his fight against the United States bank ; he was probably more instrumental than any other man in inducing the government to adopt and maintain the double currency coin standard ; he promoted the homestead movement, which was to bestow government land on those who settled on it. He was at that time deeply interested in the development of the country's material resources, and in certain plans to promote its business welfare. One was the building of a Pacific railroad, and this he had taken up again about the time Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate.

An amusing story is told of the first meeting between Senator Hamlin and Colonel Benton. The day the former took the oath of senator, he sat down in a seat near Benton. Presently Mr. Hamlin saw "Old Bullion," as Benton was called, looking at him with a smile. Then, without any preliminary remark or introduction, Benton put out his hand to the new senator from Maine, and said in a jocose, rhythmical way : "Honorable Hannibal Hamlin, of Hampden, Maine. Why, sir, your name ought to make you President some day." Benton, it appears, had watched Mr. Hamlin's course in the House, and had picked him out as a rising man. After Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate, Benton displayed almost a paternal interest in his young associate. He selected Mr. Hamlin for the position of chairman of the Committee on Commerce, urged him to take a more prominent part in the inner councils of his party, and constantly invited him to his house. Although Benton had pompous ways, yet they were pure mannerisms. Mr. Hamlin said that Benton was one of the kindest-hearted men he ever knew, and a most enjoyable and sociable entertainer. He ranked Benton, too, as one of the greatest and best men he knew among the leading statesmen of the country.

Mr. Hamlin's relations with Jefferson Davis throw some interesting

light on the peculiar views Southern senators of a certain type held with regard to the relations between the government and the individual States. These men lived in communities where they saw comparatively little of business life, and, imbibing Calhoun's doctrines, they evolved ideas of their own. They not only sincerely believed that each State in the Union was a sovereign nation, but they were always on the alert to see that the government took no step which would be in their eyes an infringement on state rights. They evidently thought the fathers of the government attached no importance to the name, "The United States," which they gave to this nation. Sometimes these Southern statesmen were carried far beyond the bounds of common sense when they got astride of their hobby. One was Clement C. Clay, Jr., of Alabama, who was known as Copperhead Clay, after the snake by that name, on account of his venomous attacks on those whom he disliked. One of Clay's notions was that the government had no right to appropriate money to improve rivers and harbors. Once he got appointed to the Committee on Commerce, where he made no end of trouble. It became necessary on a certain occasion for the committee to recommend the appropriation of \$50,000 to render navigation safe in a certain Southern harbor. Clay insisted that the State where the harbor existed should make the improvements, and all the precedents in the history of the government could not drive the idea out of his head. All the other members of the committee favored the appropriation, and after a stormy session Mr. Clay departed from the meeting in a state of high dudgeon, threatening to invoke the aid of his quixotic Southern brethren to defeat the bill.

At this juncture Senator Hamlin appealed to Jefferson Davis, who, although impregnated with the Calhoun idea, still believed that the government had a right to pass measures which were for the good of all the States. He listened to Mr. Hamlin's recital of facts, and when he saw that a refusal to improve the harbor in question might endanger life and property, he courteously interrupted Mr. Hamlin by saying: "No argument is necessary, Mr. Hamlin; the interests of humanity alone dictate that your appropriation bill should be passed, and I will promise you my support." Mr. Davis was as good as his word. He went among his Southern brethren, who were in a state of ferment over the matter, and labored with them to such good effect that Mr. Clay was able to muster just seven votes against Mr. Hamlin's bill.

On other occasions, Mr. Hamlin received cordial support from Mr. Davis, and they soon established very pleasant personal relations, which were not terminated until ten years later. The military education Mr. Davis had received at West Point, and his experience as an



engineer, had taught him the need of placing the simple demands of civilization above the tenets of political creeds. But by nature he was more practical, sensible, and courteous than the other members of the extreme and aggressive school of Southern statesmen with whom he was associated. He had a high sense of personal honor and of national obligations. One incident will illustrate. At the outbreak of the Mexican war, the government advertised through the War Department for sappers and miners. As an inducement to enlist, it offered to give all who joined the sappers and miners corps an education as mining engineers. Some seventy young men enlisted. Some were from Maine. After the war the government not only failed to keep its promise, but also refused these men a discharge from the army. The reason is not known, but there was probably a red-tape complication at the bottom of the matter. The soldiers from Maine came to Mr. Hamlin in their trouble, and he offered a bill discharging them from the army. This was referred to the Military Committee, of which Jefferson Davis was chairman. It appears that he did not hear Mr. Hamlin's argument, and he caused the committee to report against the bill, on the ground that the Senate could not interfere with the executive management of the army. The Senate accepted the committee's report and rejected Mr. Hamlin's bill. But when Mr. Hamlin saw that Mr. Davis had not grasped the principle involved, he called Davis aside, and reviewing the case, said : —

"Davis, you do not see the point. It is this: the government gave its word to these young men that if they would enlist, it would educate them as mining engineers. Now it has not only broken its pledges, but it is even trying to coerce these men into remaining in the army. I know you do not believe that the government should be allowed to break its pledges."

Mr. Hamlin's explanation cleared up the misapprehensions Mr. Davis had been laboring under, and he exclaimed : "You are right, Hamlin. I had misunderstood the case. The evidence you present exhibits the case in another light. I agree with you ; the government must keep its promises, and I pledge you I will do what I can to induce the Senate to reverse its action." In a few days, largely through Mr. Davis's efforts, Congress released the soldiers, and the Maine men, to show their appreciation of Mr. Hamlin's labors in their behalf, presented him with a gold-headed cane made from the timber of "Old Ironsides."

Mr. Hamlin was pleasantly associated on the Committee on Commerce with John Davis, of Massachusetts ; General Dodge, of Wisconsin ; John Bell, of Tennessee ; and Pierre Soule, of Louisiana. Perhaps during his entire term of service in Congress, he liked no senator better than "Honest" John Davis. The senator from Massachusetts

was noted for his upright character, sound, practical mind, and gracious, genial personality. He was Mr. Hamlin's most active co-operator during the first four years the latter was chairman of the Committee on Commerce. Together they devised and framed several important and salutary measures of legislation that are still in force. One was the well known act "to provide for the better security of the lives of passengers on board vessels propelled in whole or in part by steam."

The cause and enactment of this measure may be briefly traced, to give a concrete illustration of the nature of Mr. Hamlin's most important work at this time. Navigation on the waters of the United States had not been properly regulated, since the advent of the steamboat up to Mr. Hamlin's appointment as the head of the Committee on Commerce. An inadequate act was passed in 1838. With the opening up of the great West, followed by the discovery of gold in California, a feverish spirit prevailed in the West and Southwest. Travel was accomplished under great pressure; there was intense rivalry among the steamboat lines on the Mississippi, the Great Lakes, and the California route. Racing was frequent; the management was characterized by frightful recklessness. There was a long era of appalling accidents. Hundreds of steamboats were sunk on snags, or blown up, or burned with a terrible loss of life and property, where proper navigation laws would have averted these calamities. The Secretary of the Treasury transmitted to the Senate a report on June 30, 1851, which is a horrible record of casualties. Up to 1849, from the commencement of navigation by steam in the United States, there were 1865 steamers built in the Mississippi Valley and on the Gulf. Of that number 736 were destroyed, 419 by snags, 104 by fire, 82 by boiler explosions, and the rest by bursting of pipes, collapsing of flues, and collision. The selfishness of owners, reckless and incompetent management, lack of equipment, and inadequate navigation laws were the chief causes. In 1851 the steamer C. P. Griffith took fire on Lake Erie, and over two hundred people were lost, although the boat was only a short distance from shore. She had no lifeboats! The record presented is chiefly of local accidents, but enough has been given to show the conditions of travel on water in this period.

When Mr. Hamlin became chairman of the Committee on Commerce, steamboat travel was one of the first subjects to which he gave his attention. He set the machinery in motion as soon as possible to effect a radical and lasting reform. Mr. Davis coöperated with him. Together they personally consulted hundreds of navigators, steamship owners, scientists, and travelers, to seek the proper remedy. Together they framed a bill, but Senator Davis had the honor of taking charge of it, and of managing the measure on the floor of the Senate. He made

the principal speech in favor of the bill, and Mr. Hamlin supported him. This bill struck the evils of steamship management their death-blow. It compelled all owners of public steamboats to license their crafts; established a board of supervising inspectors to examine applicants for the positions of pilot and engineer; appointed inspectors to examine hulls and boilers; required all passenger steamers to be provided with metallic lifeboats, force pumps, fire-buckets, axes; forbade the carrying of inflammable material as cargo without certain precautions; prescribed clear and inflexible rules for navigation, to avoid collisions; exacted the display of the inspector's certificate of examination in a conspicuous place, and after many other provisions fixed heavy penalties for disregarding the statute.

This was one of the most advanced reforms that the government effected before the civil war in the interests of civilization. The importance of the measure, the wide field of inquiry it covered, the selfishness of shipowners, the opposition of certain senators, and the usual delay between the Senate and the House in coming to an agreement, were obstacles to a speedy action by Congress. Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Davis worked on their bill the larger part of two years before they could act. Mr. Davis presented the bill on July 7, 1852. It was passed the following month with over one hundred amendments by the House, which Mr. Davis advised the Senate to accept, chiefly to avoid further delay. Stephen R. Mallory, of Florida, who was afterwards secretary of the Confederate navy, was one of the few senators who opposed the bill. The reason he gave was that the progress in the invention of machinery would in time obviate the dangers of navigation in the United States. When the bill was enacted a salutary effect was soon felt. In 1854 Mr. Hamlin had the act strengthened by further amendments. The certificate of inspection, that the traveler now finds in every public passenger steamboat in this country, is living testimony to the work Mr. Hamlin and John Davis accomplished many years ago to save life and property, and is a reminder of the era of terrible accidents and criminal negligence long happily past.

Mr. Hamlin was personally instrumental in placing on the statute books a reformatory act of great importance limiting the liabilities of shipowners. The old law bore heavily and unjustly in several respects on shipowners, and they made loud complaints to Congress. An illustration may be taken from Mr. Hamlin's speech, February 26, 1851. If a ship lying at a pier caught fire and communicated the flames to a neighboring ship, the owner of the second was held responsible for the cargo on his vessel, if it was consumed. Mr. Hamlin's bill was framed on the English law, and held an owner harmless in such a contingency, provided, of course, the loss did not happen



through any fault or neglect on his part. Another section directed that all gold dust, silver bullion, jewelry, and other articles of value, when laden on a vessel, should be accompanied by a description in writing to be given to the master. The owner was thus apprised of the risks he assumed. A third section provided that the owner of a vessel should be liable only to the full extent of his ownership in the vessel. The fourth provided a remedy for those who might sustain a loss where the value of a vessel and her freight for the voyage should not be sufficient to pay the whole amount of the loss. A fifth prescribed that where A chartered his vessel to B, he should not be held responsible for B's debts. Another fixed a penalty of \$1000 for the loading of inflammable materials, specified without informing the master of the vessel in writing. This is only an outline of the bill; the particulars need not be detailed. It is only necessary to say that it placed American shipping on a footing with English shipping. The merchants of New York city tendered Senator Hamlin a public banquet in recognition of his labors in behalf of American shipping interests, but he declined it.

An important act of legislation which Mr. Hamlin conceived, and the passage of which he secured, was one providing for the recording of the conveyances of vessels. It is an interesting fact that prior to the enactment of this law there was no national uniform system of recording the titles of vessels; it was subject to local laws. Much confusion of titles arose; worse than that, some sharpers took advantage of the condition of affairs to perpetrate outrageous swindles. There were many cases on record where a man sold a ship or vessel in one State, took the craft to another, and sold it again. Mr. Hamlin's long experience in maritime affairs, both as the chairman of the Committee on Commerce and as shipowner, were the means of his ascertaining the necessity of a reform. He drafted the bill without suggestion from any one, and procured its passage without opposition. It is recorded among the acts of Congress in the United States Statutes at Large, vol. ix. p. 440. It caused comparatively slight litigation, and was a great benefit to marine interests. It became a law on July 29, 1850.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Shaw Lindsay, elected member of Parliament from Tynemouth in 1854, one of the largest shipowners in England, and a well-known writer on maritime subjects, was commissioned by the British government in 1856 to visit the United States in the interest of better maritime laws. He met Mr. Hamlin at Hampden, and in speeches before the Philadelphia Board of Trade, in 1856, asserted that he had met no man on either side of the Atlantic who understood the commercial relations between Great Britain and the United States, and the reformatory measures needed, as well as Governor Hamlin did. In 1860 Mr. Lindsay revisited the United States when Mr. Hamlin was candidate for Vice-President, and repeated his opinion in another speech.

Other bills, measures, and incidents with which Senator Hamlin was identified during this period as chairman of the Committee on Commerce may be briefly grouped. He made several short speeches in favor of improving certain rivers and harbors. He offered an amendment to the pension laws, which was adopted. He was instrumental in having the revenue laws codified. Congress passed a resolution which he introduced appropriating \$10,000 for that purpose. He had charge of the bills making appropriations for the construction of numerous custom-houses, — at Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Mobile, Wheeling, Bangor, Belfast, Bath, Portsmouth, Galveston, Georgetown, Milwaukee, Norfolk, and many other places. He was also a member of the Committee on Printing, and these duties increased the details of his work, a record of which it would hardly be worth while to present, though it was laborious and important.

There are several incidents to be recorded now of a larger and more general interest. Congress was still engaged with the problem of cheap postage when Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate. His interest was still strong in this subject. He made a few short, practical speeches on this needed reform, favoring a large reduction of rates. It is noticeable that he reiterated his opposition to the franking privilege in some remarks on January 19, 1849. His stated reason was that he believed that the Post-office Department should derive its support from its income, and that none should enjoy the benefit of the mail service without contributing to its maintenance. To the end of his life Mr. Hamlin opposed franking. A story is told that illustrates the scrupulous use he made of the franking privilege. Some senators had a rather loose idea of this right, and thought it proper for them to frank a friend's letter. They looked on the franking privilege as a sort of free pass which they might use for the benefit of their personal friends. One day a wealthy man, who believed in getting all that he could without paying for it, had a little business with Senator Hamlin. After this was settled, the man handed Mr. Hamlin a couple of letters, saying, —

"Senator, I want you to do me a little favor. Just put your name on these letters, will you?"

Mr. Hamlin pulled out his pocket book, and taking out some money, said, —

"I will give you the money, sir."

"Sir," replied the astonished man, "do you mean to insult me?"

"No, sir," said Senator Hamlin; "you ask me to insult the government by abusing a privilege which it extends to me as a senator."

One of the most practical and beneficial acts of legislation Mr.

Hamlin was identified with was the building of the Pacific Railroad. While he was not one of the conspicuous leaders in this enterprise, he was one of the strongest friends the project had in Congress, and accomplished a great deal of work to secure the necessary legislation. It will be recalled that in his first Oregon speech in the House, Mr. Hamlin predicted the construction of a transcontinental railway. In 1849 Senator Benton instituted the legislation to build the road. In 1853 Congress authorized surveys of the proposed routes. Senator Hamlin supported this legislation in speeches, newspaper articles, and by his vote. He urged that the road would bind the Union closer together, open up travel, develop the country, increase trade, and would also be a great safeguard to the nation as a means of military defense. The strict constructionists and advocates of the extreme doctrine of state rights opposed the granting a government subsidy to help build the Pacific Railroad. Mr. Hamlin believed that the government had the necessary power. The Constitution gave Congress the right to regulate commerce between the States. But the broad, general reasons he had were that the United States was a nation, and the welfare of the Union could be promoted by the construction of a transcontinental railroad; that as the enterprise was beyond the power of individuals to carry out, the government ought to act. The breaking out of the civil war opened the eyes of many conservative men who had not seen the necessity for calling on the government to lend its aid to this plan to unite the East and the West.

Another circumstance occurred at this time which shows the range of Mr. Hamlin's ideas in regard to national, commercial, and business interests. He reported a bill from the Committee on Commerce calling for certain appropriations. One section authorized the government to appropriate \$5000 to send a commission to Paraguay to study the conditions of trade there in order to ascertain how the United States might obtain a market in that country. It should be explained that there were circumstances at this particular time that rendered it advisable for the government to operate first in Paraguay; Mr. Hamlin had in mind the desirability of opening up trade in South America, and selected Paraguay as the starting-point. But Mr. Hamlin's resolutions met with only good-natured ridicule. One senator declared that he had never heard of such a preposterous suggestion. Mr. Hamlin turned the tables on him by reading an extract from the last report of the Secretary of the Treasury favoring the extension of our trade with South America, and showing that England was rapidly getting control of the South American markets. But the Senate thought Mr. Hamlin's resolution chimerical, and, after the expenditure of considerable humor, rejected it. Nearly forty years later,



when James G. Blaine proposed his plan of reciprocity, there was a large party that laughed at it at his expense. Yet England controls South American trade to-day, and possibly the British merchants have their own idea of American humor.

Frequent complaints were heard from time to time that American seamen who had been wrecked on the coast of Japan had been imprisoned and barbarously treated by the natives. Mr. Hamlin investigated these charges. At the same time his attention was drawn to the possibilities of trade which the United States might build up with Oriental nations. On February 21, 1850, he introduced a resolution calling on the Secretary of State for whatever information he might possess covering these points, and also requesting him to report on the advisability of appointing a commissioner or diplomatic agent to open up amicable relations and negotiate commercial treaties with these nations. These resolutions were adopted by the Senate on March 21, 1850. Negotiations were begun with Japan, and in 1854 Commodore M. C. Perry signed an amicable treaty with the Japanese government. The incident created great interest. These are only the dry facts.

In the summer of 1852 there was again trouble between American and Canadian fishermen along the coast of the British provinces. This time there was a war scare. The English government sent a fleet of a dozen or more men-of-war to the scene of contention. Commodore M. C. Perry was dispatched to the same place, and once more the question of our rights in the North American fisheries was under discussion. Senator Hamlin was peculiarly interested in this question, and he made, on August 3 and 5, 1852, the most extensive and comprehensive speech he had delivered after he became a working senator. It is of historical value since it deals minutely with a subject that has caused so much friction. While it need not be reviewed, the nature of Mr. Hamlin's argument may be indicated. He demonstrated that Great Britain had acknowledged by treaty and acts of acquiescence that American fishermen had the right to take fish within the three-mile limit along the coast of the British provinces. He urged the government to protect the fishermen in their rights, and showed how the fisheries had developed the American navy. His citation of facts left no room for doubt as to our rights, and his speech was accepted by the Senate as authoritative. Those who care to investigate the subject further will find this speech of historical authority, and also a striking example of Mr. Hamlin's peculiar powers of statement. He convinced the Senate, and at the same time provided the fishermen themselves with arguments that they could use with understanding. Pierre Soule, one of the most eloquent members of the Senate, pronounced this "a remarkable speech."

Nothing serious came from the dispute over the fisheries. Webster, who was still secretary of state, and dying, spent some of his last hours in smoothing over the trouble with Mr. Crampton, the British minister at Washington. The reciprocity treaty of 1854 was the outcome of this.

But this period of quietude was now drawing to a close; the slavery issue was beginning to loom up again. The adoption of the compromise measures had the effect of increasing the small anti-slavery party in the Senate by two important additions, — Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, and Benjamin F. Wade, of Ohio. There could hardly be a greater contrast between two leaders. Sumner was the scholar in politics, and excelled as an orator. He represented the most enlightened State in the Union, and his supporters encouraged him to give all his time to the slavery issue. This was a great advantage to Mr. Sumner. He was practically excused from the routine duties of a senator, and was also relieved from the worry of managing his own campaigns in Massachusetts. He was the Bay State's selected champion in the anti-slavery fight. Wade, who was also a Massachusetts man by birth, was the antithesis of Sumner. He was self-made, raised up from the ranks, a bluff, emphatic, aggressively honest man of great but undisciplined powers. It is related that he once began a speech by saying: "Mr. President, them resolutions." But the tremendous blows which he dealt in debate made him feared by his better educated opponents. He was a "rough jewel." Mr. Hamlin enjoyed pleasant personal relations with Sumner at this time, but of Wade it may be said that few men were ever closer to Mr. Hamlin's heart than "bluff" Ben Wade, of Ohio, one of the bravest of men.

The Fugitive Slave Law was now beginning to make serious trouble, and the Senate had occasional reminders of the indignation the measure provoked at the North. Senator Hamlin early came to the conclusion that this law would eventually work out its own destruction. He realized as Grant did when the latter said, "The way to abolish a bad law is to enforce it." Yet Mr. Hamlin strongly favored action. With the Senate in the hands of the pro-slavery party, it was hopeless now to agitate a complete repeal. President Fillmore, Edward Everett, secretary of state, Rufus Choate, General Cass, Stephen A. Douglas, and scores of other prominent Northern statesmen were opposed to further agitation. But Mr. Hamlin hoped that Northern sentiment would eventually crystallize against this law, and compel its statesmen to change their course. In the mean time he thought the most practical step to be taken was to favor trial by jury. No more arbitrary or despotic law was ever placed on the statute books of a republic than the Fugitive Slave Law. It vested complete power in a United States commissioner to decide the liberty of a colored

person. There was no appeal from his decision. He even received twice the fee for consigning a colored man to slavery than for dismissing his case. No one knows how many freed men and women were sworn into slavery by perjurers and kidnappers. This was why Mr. Hamlin favored trial by jury as the first act of remedial legislation.

During the first few years Sumner was in the Senate, prior to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, he was rather quiet, while familiarizing himself with his position. But he made several moves at this time which were precursors of his notable course in subsequent years. One of the first things Sumner did of importance after entering the Senate was to offer, on May 26, 1852, a petition from the Society of Friends of New England praying for the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. The pro-slavery men were more tolerant and courteous than their predecessors were in the days of the gag-law. Mr. Mangum and Mr. Badger, for example, expressed the desire that the petition should be received, although announcing their intention of voting to table it. The petition was received by a unanimous vote, but it was promptly tabled by a vote of 40 to 10.<sup>1</sup> The ten who voted to take up the petition were Messrs. Hamlin, Sumner, Borland, Chase, Wade, Hale, Seward, Davis, of Massachusetts, and Walker and Dodge, of Wisconsin. But this vote did not entirely represent the anti-slavery sentiment in the Senate. Among the forty who opposed the petition were Hamilton Fish, of New York, whose public career is without a blot; Alpheus Felch, a pure and able senator from Michigan, who was a decided opponent of slavery, and William Upham, an anti-slavery man from Vermont. The difference between these men and their anti-slavery colleagues was that between conservatism and radicalism, or, fairer still, a matter of judgment. They were averse to reopening the agitation. They did not think the time had come for that, and that is the whole story.

On July 27, 1852, Sumner introduced a bill calling on the Judiciary Committee to consider the expediency of reporting a bill to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. This was rejected the next day, after a short debate, by a vote of 32 to 10.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hamlin was one of the ten who supported Sumner's bill. But this was only fencing. The narrative now turns back to a marked epoch in the history of Maine, — the senatorial election of 1850. Many details have been omitted from this record of Mr. Hamlin's work, in order that the story of events might not be too long delayed. But it is well to close this chapter by adding the facts, that during the seven years Mr. Hamlin was chairman of the Committee on Commerce, he personally exam-

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Globe*, May 26, 1852, p. 1475.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, July 28, p. 1953.



ined all bills and measures brought before it, answered all important communications to him in his own writing, while he was in the Senate, and finally made no distinction between his constituents on account of politics in discharging his duties as senator. This was his conception of his duties as a business senator, although he was always a strong partisan.

## CHAPTER XXI

### HAMLIN'S HARDEST CONTEST WITH THE SLAVE POWER

THE fierce quarrel over the omnibus bill in Congress widened the split in both parties on the slavery issue ; at the same time, it nerved Mr. Hamlin's pro-slavery opponents in Maine to make a supreme effort to prevent his reelection to the Senate in the summer of 1850. This was the severest struggle that Mr. Hamlin ever had with the slave party ; and there is no incident in his life which so clearly reveals the peculiarly perplexing and practical difficulties that beset him as an anti-slavery leader. Again Mr. Hamlin had the people of his party with him, and the politicians against him. Two thirds of the party favored Mr. Hamlin's return to the Senate ; in fact, he was renominated in the legislative caucus by two thirds of the Democratic members ; but by the accidents of politics, the balance of power in this election was held for two months by a small number of pro-slavery men, who did their utmost to defeat Mr. Hamlin. They did, however, make several offers of compromise, and promised to elect Mr. Hamlin if he would consent to the rescinding of resolutions he had caused the previous legislature to pass, instructing the Maine congressmen to oppose all measures extending slavery into free territory. This would have allowed Senator Hamlin to continue his opposition to slavery ; but it would have freed Senator Bradbury and two Hunker representatives, Thomas J. D. Fuller and Moses McDonald, from all restraint. Mr. Hamlin refused to listen to these terms ; he was contending for his principles and the honor of Maine. In the end, he was elected by the aid of a few Free-Soilers, who came to his help in a dramatic way at a critical moment. This was one of the hardest blows the pro-slavery machine in Maine received before it was wiped out of existence by the civil war.

Discouraging conditions existed at the outset. The pro-slavery machine was at the height of its power, and in consequence of the action of its leaders, the Democratic party was steadily losing ground in Maine. This machine had a leader in the governor's chair, Mr. Dana ; two men in Congress, Fuller and McDonald ; a quasi friend in Senator Bradbury ; half a dozen able men in the state Senate ; twenty-five in the House. It had adherents and henchmen by the score in minor state offices who were appointed by Governor



ANTE-BELLUM MAINE LEADERS.





Dana. Among its prominent leaders were Nathan Clifford, who had just retired from President Polk's Cabinet, and was anxiously seeking a return to official life ; George F. Shepley, who was afterwards judge of the United States Circuit Court, and was now recognized as one of the most brilliant lawyers in New England ; Bion Bradbury, who was the suavest and craftiest wire-puller the Democratic party of Maine ever produced ; Wyman B. S. Moor, who had been attorney-general of Maine four times ; Shepard Cary, who had been in Congress and was now in the state Senate ; Virgil D. Parris, another former congressman ; Benjamin Wiggin, who was in the governor's council ; George W. Stanley, a leading banker of the State, a power in Kennebec County ; and many others who were well known in their day. They comprised a group of strong and resourceful politicians.

Mr. Hamlin and his friends had two things to do to secure his reelection : one was to wrest the control of the party machine away from the pro-slavery wing, and the other was to carry the State for the Democracy. It is interesting to observe the kind of men who were Mr. Hamlin's most active followers in this campaign. There were few office-seekers among them, and not many practiced politicians. They did not have a tithe of the titles the pro-slavery men enjoyed. Outside of Mr. Hamlin's lieutenants, they were mostly plain men from the people. The one on whom Mr. Hamlin depended most in this campaign was William P. Haines, of Saco, who at this time was one of the leading business men of Maine, and was largely instrumental in developing the textile manufacturing interests of his part of the State. He was a strong, sagacious, upright, modest man, a gentleman, and a scholar. Mr. Hamlin wanted Mr. Haines for his colleague in the Senate ; but he preferred private life, though he gave his time ungrudgingly for his party's good. Ezra B. French, of Damariscotta, was another man whom Mr. Hamlin highly esteemed. He was Maine's secretary of state for four years, was one of the first Republicans Maine sent to Congress, and was appointed second auditor of the United States Treasury by President Lincoln, at Mr. Hamlin's request. George P. Sewall, an able lawyer and wit, of Old Town, was the practical politician. Judge R. D. Rice, of Augusta, who served nearly twelve years on the Supreme Bench of Maine with honor to the State and credit to himself ; General Samuel F. Hersey, a leading lumberman of Maine ; William T. Johnson, editor of the "Augusta Age ;" Joseph Bartlett, editor of the "Bangor Jeffersonian ;" Leander Valentine, of Westbrook ; Charles J. Talbot,<sup>1</sup> of Wil-

<sup>1</sup> One result of this contest was the cementing of a lifelong friendship between Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Talbot, who was a pure, unselfish, and large-minded man of uncommon ability and character. He was probably closer to Mr. Hamlin than

ton ; George H. Shirley, of Portland ; John S. Chadwick, of Bangor ; General John J. Perry and George F. Emery, of Oxford County ; Samuel Peters Brown, of Bluehill ; Isaac Dyer, of Baldwin ; John Gardner, of Patten, and others, were also loyal supporters of Mr. Hamlin.

The first move Mr. Hamlin made was to select his candidate for governor. A man was needed who would unite both wings of the party, and bring back five thousand Democrats who had voted the Free-Soil ticket the year before. He decided on Dr. John Hubbard, an eminent physician of Hallowell, who was a man he regarded of "popular possibilities." Dr. Hubbard was bluff, honest, kind-hearted, sturdy, of considerable political ability, and had an immense practice. He was nominated after a sharp fight in a convention of over six hundred delegates, and elected over Elijah L. Hamlin, the Whig candidate, and the senator's brother, by a substantial majority. The Democrats also carried the legislature by a good vote, with Mr. Hamlin's friends largely in the ascendancy ; in fact, more than two thirds of the Democrats elected had been instructed by their constituents to vote for Mr. Hamlin's renomination. Thus, with the Hunkers beaten in the state convention and in the legislative caucus, and with the anti-slavery men in control of the state government and legislature, Mr. Hamlin's success seemed assured without further trouble.

But it is the unexpected that happens in politics. Shortly after the personnel of the legislature had been determined, the Hunkers discovered a desperate chance of blocking Mr. Hamlin's election. They hoped that they could create a peculiar contingency out of certain conditions that existed in the state Senate. The Senate was entitled to thirty-one members, and it appeared before its organization that there would be twenty-one Democrats and ten Whigs. The Hunker opportunity arose from the fact that there had been several failures to elect, and the legislature was required to fill the vacancies. Now the Hunkers figured that if they could elect a pro-slavery man to fill one of these vacancies, they might be able to hold up the Senate. Of the Democrats in that body, eleven were known to be warm friends of Mr. Hamlin's ; five, who had been elected or were certain of getting their seats, were privately determined to bolt him ; four more were very doubtful, though they were inclined to stand by the party nominee. The eleven senators who were Mr. Hamlin's friends were a majority of the Democrats ; but although these were sufficient to give him a regular party nomination in the Senate, they could not elect him, sixteen votes being necessary for a choice. The

any other political associate in Maine. George H. Shirley, of the same pure type, is another brave anti-slavery fighter who was one of Mr. Hamlin's most devoted and affectionate friends for life. See Neal Dow's *Reminiscences*.



plan the Hunkers concocted involved an unscrupulous violation of party pledges and usages. One feature included a secret bargain with the Whigs to elect George F. Shepley to fill one of the vacancies in the Senate ; another was a scheme to lead the doubtful senators off on a collateral issue. If this plotting succeeded, Mr. Hamlin's election in the Senate would fail by one vote, unless the Free-Soil members came to his aid, and steps were taken to meet this contingency.

This conspiracy was set on foot soon after the fall election of 1849. As the legislature did not convene until the following May, the Hunkers had ample time to work every wire within their clutches. They were of course too adroit to give any hint of the purpose until they had carefully canvassed the situation, and sounded every pro-slavery Democrat of influence in Maine. But all this time the Hunkers were asserting in public their intention of contesting Mr. Hamlin's renomination in the regular party caucus. This was to divert attention from their underground scheming. There was a comic side to the Hunkers' proceedings. In public they demanded Mr. Hamlin's defeat, on the allegation that he was an "unsafe party man" and an "unsound Democrat ;" yet in private they were preparing to violate the fundamental principle of the Democratic party, that the will of the majority should be respected. They shut their eyes to the inconsistency of their course ; it was "anything to beat Hamlin."

But Mr. Hamlin's friends were not to be deceived. They knew the temper and the disposition of their opponents, and they watched the Hunker camp day and night. There were mysterious conferences in the governor's rooms at Augusta, between Mr. Dana and the leaders of the pro-slavery wing. The Hunker rank and file were in a hubbub of excitement. The real Wild-Cat element began to show its claws. This crowd was composed of men who, happily for Maine, were few in number, although they were cunning and reckless. They would have been slaveholders had they lived in the South. They instinctively opposed an honest man ; they could not understand such a man. During the war of the rebellion, they were copperheads of the most virulent type. They were perniciously alive in this contest, and their conduct reflected the actual hatred that the pro-slavery machine had for Senator Hamlin. They waged a campaign of slander ; they sought to arouse racial prejudice. A favorite trick was to coin catch phrases and pass them around the State. One was, "The niggers love Hamlin ;" another was, "Hamlin loves the niggers." One wretch whom his unsavory crowd managed to get into Congress for a short time capped the climax of slander against Mr. Hamlin, inventing a story which he told in a cunning way, so as to make it appear that Mr. Hamlin had negro blood in him.

A campaign of falsehood against an honest man never failed to react

on its authors. In this instance, the tactics of the Wild-Cats made the anti-slavery men all the more watchful. They cherished Mr. Hamlin's interests as they would their own. Their devotion to him is the touching feature of this contest. They might be outwitted in skirmishes and be drawn into ambuscades, but in fighting in the open, when principle, courage, and honesty were the heaviest guns, they won. Through the alertness of his friends, Mr. Hamlin quickly ascertained the formation of a plot to cheat him out of a reelection, even if he should be renominated in his party's regular caucus. It appears that the Hunkers overreached themselves in their desire to pledge a member of the House to join in their contemplated bolt. Secretary French had suspected that the Hunkers were brewing mischief at their mysterious conferences with Governor Dana. He obtained proof of his suspicions. A representative named Small, of Newry, told Mr. French that Bion Bradbury had informed him that the Hunkers would not support Mr. Hamlin, and if necessary to defeat him would remain out of the party caucus, so as to escape being bound by its action. Mr. French warned Mr. Hamlin in December, 1849, and added these prophetic words to his letter:—

"Desperate and reckless, they (the pro-slavery men) will make a push for power under Dana such has never been seen in this State. . . . I have no hope in their prudence; it is rather in their recklessness and imprudence which will excite indignation, and justify bold retaliatory measures, that I see hopes of health and success to the party."

Mr. French was right. With all the zeal of a newly made convert, Governor Dana lent the aid of his office to the schemes of his faction to strengthen the pro-slavery machine in its tricky fight against Mr. Hamlin. Few men who have occupied the governor's chair in Maine ever prostituted the power of their office to a baser purpose, or more willfully violated the sentiment of the State, than Mr. Dana did in this fight between the anti-slavery and pro-slavery Democracy. This was a great pity, for in his private life Mr. Dana was an upright man, of whom better things had been expected. But he worshiped the politician's god,—party action,—and fell. In spite of his professed belief in the rule of the majority, the rights of the States, the sentiment of Maine, the warnings and protests of the majority of his party, Governor Dana's last important act before retiring from office was to fill all the offices at his disposal, which were a large number and important, with bitter and avowed supporters of the doctrine of slavery extension.

This act, in a strong anti-slavery State at this crisis, carries its own condemnation. The feelings of the anti-slavery Democracy may be more easily imagined than described. It infuriated them to see the power of the state government employed to thwart the wishes of

the vast majority ; they felt as if circumstances were conspiring to tie them hand and foot. But without going further into the details of Governor Dana's acts, their importance may be readily gathered from the following terse letter of comment that Senator Hamlin wrote Mr. Haines, January 11, 1850 :—

"I have seen the appointments to which you allude. I did not doubt, nor do I now, that they are made mainly to injure me. . . . I know the desperation with which I am to be fought, and while I am not at all nervous, yet, of course, I have some anxiety. I fear the use of *money* against me. Yet with prudence and proper effort all will be well. The acts of Governor Dana will react with terrible force."

There were other reasons why Mr. Hamlin felt himself master of the situation. This involves a short explanation of his political methods. When he went into a political fight, in which his own fortunes were at stake, he usually formulated a plan of action and selected his lieutenants. He assigned to each a specific line of work, but always kept to himself the plan in its entirety. The reason of this is easily understood when it is remembered that it was Mr. Hamlin's nature to command and to adopt the simplest methods to obtain a result. He trusted and believed in his friends, but he feared accidents and confusion. Now, while Mr. Haines, Mr. French, Mr. Sewall, and other of Mr. Hamlin's lieutenants were each following up certain details, Mr. Hamlin had men, unknown to his chief supporters, at work in other parts of the State carrying out other directions. The business intrusted to Mr. Haines and his associates was to help Mr. Hamlin keep his forces intact ; the task devolving on the second group of lieutenants was to assist Mr. Hamlin in dividing his opponents and upsetting their plans.

This programme was well carried out, and with results that were not without an amusing side. In the beginning of this campaign, the Hunkers had intended to make a fight in the caucus against Mr. Hamlin ; and they thought of a bolt as a last desperate expedient. They encouraged Mr. Dana to enter the lists, hoping that by an energetic use of the patronage he might weaken Mr. Hamlin's forces and perhaps beat him. This was good Hunker argument. But as the campaign waxed hot, the Hunkers found their chance of defeating Mr. Hamlin in the caucus melting away ; it was ascertained that Dana could not carry his own county, Oxford, and he was therefore dropped. At this juncture the pro-slavery leaders decided to bring forward Bion Bradbury as their candidate. He was willing, and forthwith began to travel all over Maine, organizing his own campaign. There was no secret about it ; the Hunker leaders backed Bradbury, and his friends made great claims for him. This was the situation several months before the legislature convened.



Although Bradbury had small chance of success, he evinced, in so marked a degree, a talent for organization, and an ability for pulling wires, that Mr. Hamlin quickly recognized in him a dangerous opponent. If Bion Bradbury had lived in New York city, where his peculiarly adroit political ability would have found a suitable field, he doubtless might have attained great prominence as a political leader. He was a member of the National Executive Committee of the Democratic party for many years, and exercised no mean influence in its councils, though he was but little known outside of Maine. Mr. Hamlin took measures to head Bradbury off. It appears that in selecting Bradbury for their candidate, the Hunker leaders had omitted to consult their rank and file. Mr. Hamlin took advantage of this; Mr. Bradbury, who was still young in politics, overlooked the circumstance. While he was spending time and money in traveling over Maine, Mr. Hamlin was quietly laying plans to trip him up. For example, Mr. Hamlin intimated to a confidential friend in Cumberland County that he would like to have it suggested to the Hunkers there that John Anderson, of that county, ought to have the support of his own district. This pleased the friends of Mr. Anderson, who, by the way, was a popular and able man, and they brought him forward as their candidate, with results to be noted later. Mr. Hamlin introduced clever tactics in other counties, and before long the Hunkers had a very interesting contest in their own camp to settle, without dreaming how it originated.

Other incidents happened as the campaign progressed from stage to stage that showed Mr. Hamlin's knowledge of men and politics. During his long career he made very few mistakes in choosing friends. It is true, too, that he never forgot a friend who helped him, or an enemy who willfully harmed him. In this campaign, Mr. Hamlin's letters to his friends are proofs of his shrewd and clear estimates of the promises of men. There were over one hundred Democrats in the legislature; the canvass lasted more than ten months, and during a large part of that time Mr. Hamlin's own lieutenants disagreed as to the number of votes he would receive in the caucus. In December, 1849, Mr. Hamlin wrote George P. Sewall, who was to be his manager in the House, that the Hunkers would nominate John Anderson, and would cast not over twenty-five votes in the House. Mr. Sewall, a very clever politician, and on the ground, too, dissented from these predictions. He said Bion Bradbury would be the Hunker nominee, and would poll more votes than Mr. Hamlin had figured that he would. But Anderson was the Hunkers' man, and for two months his vote in the House averaged twenty-five. In March, 1850, Mr. Hamlin wrote Mr. Haines that on the lowest estimate he would have sixty-one votes in the House and eleven in the

Senate. Precisely the same time Bradbury claimed that he would have forty-seven votes in the House, and he boasted of this to Sewall, who reported it to Mr. Hamlin. Commenting on this, in a letter to Mr. Haines, Mr. Hamlin said: "The Dana clique know absolutely nothing about the senatorial question. They cannot beat me." Between March and May, when the caucus was held, Mr. Hamlin gained some votes. He then announced that he would have sixty-seven votes in the House and eleven in the Senate. This was the exact vote by which he was nominated. Mr. Hamlin's private correspondence shows that during the entire canvass he was in doubt about only two Democrats out of the one hundred or more in the legislature. After much promising and fair talk these men went against him.

When the legislature at last met, in May, 1850, it was proved that Mr. Hamlin's forces outnumbered the Hunkers nearly three to one. Men came forward and were counted. This was a crushing blow to the pro-slavery machine, after the bluster its leaders had made about beating Mr. Hamlin in the caucus. But the crowning humiliation the Hunker leaders suffered was when they discovered that their rank and file had got away from them, and would not accept Bion Bradbury as their candidate, even after his hard work in organizing the Hunker campaign against Mr. Hamlin. The leaders were greatly disgusted, Bradbury was very sore, while Mr. Hamlin was secretly much amused. The pro-slavery men were indeed so confused over this difficulty that they could not agree on a candidate for several days. All they could do at first was to decide on a bolt, and to stay out of the party caucus. The fact is the Hunkers never learned how Bion Bradbury was bowled out of the great senatorial contest of 1850 and John Anderson brought forward in his place. The story has never been told before. It is possible that this ruse saved Mr. Hamlin's reelection. Bradbury was a member of the House, and had he been the Hunkers' nominee, it was among the possibilities that he might in that capacity have prevented the legislature from electing a senator. His cunning, adroitness, and gift for intrigue made him feared; his defeat lessened his prestige. Mr. Hamlin's efforts to pull Bradbury out of the field show that he was convinced there was a necessity for it. The incident evidences how hard Mr. Hamlin had to fight in ante-bellum days to remain in the Senate as an anti-slavery man.

The long looked for caucus took place on May 20; Mr. Hamlin was nominated in the House by a vote of 67 to 1 for Dana, and in the Senate by 11 to 1 for Nathan Clifford. The Hunkers carried out their threats, and refused to enter the caucus. They sent Shepard Cary, however, to the senate caucus to make their official declaration

of war. Cary's speech was an effort to read Mr. Hamlin out of the Democratic party. It was an unscrupulous misrepresentation and a garbled version of Mr. Hamlin's relations with the Democracy ; but it is of special interest as an exposition of the curious ideas men of Cary's stamp had of the anti-slavery Democratic leaders. He was a bold, energetic man, and had a considerable following among the rural Hunkers of Aroostook County ; indeed, he entertained ambitions to succeed Senator Bradbury. The principal points in Cary's speech were summarized in the "Bangor Democrat," the pro-slavery organ of eastern Maine, as a serious indictment against Mr. Hamlin in the following language :—

"It was openly charged in the caucus against Mr. Hamlin, that he had been the ally of John P. Hale, of New Hampshire, in treasonable designs against the Democratic party ; that he had been closely connected in sentiment, sympathy, and action with the Wilmots of Pennsylvania and the Van Burens of New York, who had successfully conspired against the Democratic party of the nation and defeated the election of General Cass ; . . . that he was an opponent of the measures of the last Democratic administration, and had denounced James K. Polk as a 'weak man, a second edition of John Tyler, not much improved ;' that he favored the bringing forward of Mr. Van Buren against General Cass as a candidate for President ; that he had approved the action of the Buffalo convention, and though Mr. Hamlin was in this city (Augusta) at the time, he denied none of these charges or allegations except that relating to the Buffalo convention."

This indictment was a bold perversion of facts ; yet that is not surprising considering the fact that it was framed by men who believed both in human slavery and party servitude. It was simply a pretext ; it was drawn up by men who supported slavery to give their partisan-blinded followers formulated reasons for bolting Mr. Hamlin. He could be sacrificed on the altar of party fetich, — party action. It was a solemn indictment in the eyes of men who regarded slavery as a sacred institution and consecrated by the Constitution ; it stiffened the backbones of thirty odd Hunkers who voted against Mr. Hamlin for two months in this session of the legislature. But the fact was, Mr. Hamlin supported Cass, though against his wishes ; he supported the principal measures of the Polk administration, though not its pro-slavery policy ; he supported Levi Woodbury against Van Buren and Cass in the Democratic National Convention of 1848 ; he did not indorse the action of the Buffalo convention. This last story was pure invention ; the man who was responsible for it showed a telegram from E. S. Hamlin, a Whig of Ohio, to the Buffalo convention, and out of this concocted the story about Senator Hamlin. It seems incredible, in view of Mr. Hamlin's character, his public record,



and the palpable falsity of these charges, that they should have had an effect against him ; but men who in their hearts upheld slavery could not but take a perverted view of a man who opposed the institution. That is all that need be said.

The Hunkers now claimed that they were the real Democracy and that Mr. Hamlin was an "unsound Democrat." They ignored the fact that their national party had not as yet authoritatively accepted the doctrine of slavery extension in its national conventions ; they repudiated the principle of state rights in the case of their own State ; they denied the rule of the majority in their own local party. After this inconsistency, it was not strange that in their blindness they should dethrone their own god, — party action. They rejected the action of the regular party caucus, and then entered into a corrupt bargain with the Whigs to defeat their own party. This involved even a further violation of party usages and personal pledges, and the scheme, therefore, requires an explanation. There were five vacancies in the Senate, owing to failures to elect. The legislature was compelled to fill these vacancies. The long established custom was for the senators and representatives from the county where a vacancy existed to meet in a party caucus and nominate candidates from whom the legislature made its choice. The anti-slavery Democrats honorably and loyally abided by this custom. For example, there had been a failure to elect in a district in Washington County. George M. Chase, a Hunker, who was the regular nominee on his party's ticket, was duly nominated by the Democratic delegates from Washington County, and elected by the votes of the anti-slavery Democrats over the Whig nominee. But the Hunkers broke faith in a Cumberland County district. There had been two Democratic candidates before the people in this district : Charles Megquier, an anti-slavery man, and George F. Shepley, a Hunker. The Cumberland Democratic senators and representatives nominated Mr. Megquier by a vote of seven to two and made the nomination unanimous. But the Hunkers, having elected Chase, now burned their last bridge ; they made a combination with the Whigs and elected Shepley the day after the senatorial caucus.

This was the most serious blow Mr. Hamlin had yet received. By electing Shepley the coalition had proved that it could control the legislature, and no man could foresee how long it would hang together. Truly, "politics makes strange bedfellows." Here were the anti-slavery Whigs working with pro-slavery Democrats to punish a statesman for fighting the slave power. Yet it was the politics of the day. The Whigs justified their course by claiming that it would help them to elect a Whig to succeed Senator Bradbury the next year.<sup>1</sup> The anti-

<sup>1</sup> It is an interesting fact that in 1851 the pro-slavery Democrats bolted Lot

slavery Democrats were naturally much alarmed over this turn of affairs, and at once summoned Mr. Hamlin from Washington.

When he arrived at Augusta, he found the situation more complicated than when the coalition was first formed. The Hunkers were leaving no stone unturned to accomplish his defeat, and were now concentrating their efforts on the Senate. Mr. Hamlin had eleven supporters there, but sixteen votes were necessary to elect him in a full vote, — thirty-one. If the four doubtful senators voted for Mr. Hamlin, that would give him fifteen votes, or within one of an election. In that event there was danger of the Free-Soilers coming to Mr. Hamlin's rescue. They were having mysterious conferences by themselves, and no one outside of their councils could say what they would do. The Hunkers laid plans to get control of the Senate, and also to lead the doubtful senators off on a collateral issue. They tried to elect Shepard Cary president of the Senate, and attempted to bribe a senator to vote for him on the promise that Cary would resign, and he should be promoted to the presiding chair. This was the Chase-Dunn trick that beat Mr. Hamlin in 1846; the important difference was that the senator approached this time was an honest man. But the other scheme was more dangerous. This was to make it an issue with Mr. Hamlin to consent to the rescinding of the resolutions he had induced the previous legislature to pass instructing the Maine senators and representatives in Congress to oppose all measures favoring the extension of slavery into free soil. The Hunkers argued with some plausibility that these resolutions of instruction infringed on the liberty of the individual congressmen. Senator Bradbury upheld this view by journeying from Washington to Augusta to urge the repeal of the resolutions. This made an impression on the doubtful senators; they listened, and, listening, they were led away too, to remain with the Hunkers to the end. The inevitable result was the sickening cry of compromise!

The councils of the anti-slavery men were divided, and feeling was running high when Mr. Hamlin took charge of his campaign. Judge R. D. Rice, who was at Augusta, wrote: "I saw Mr. Hamlin to-day. He is calm, smiling, confident, and surrounded by friends wherever he goes." Almost the first thing Mr. Hamlin did was to gather his supporters together, encourage them, repeat a rule he always laid down on entering a party contest, and outline the plan of action. He talked to men this time, who always treasured up in their hearts recollections of moments like this with the leader they loved so well. What Mr. Hamlin said was substantially as follows:—

"My friends, we are going to have a long and hot fight. Now, I M. Morrill, an anti-slavery man, and, uniting with the Whigs, elected William Pitt Fessenden, a strong anti-slavery man, to the United States Senate.

want you to keep cool and keep up your courage. Don't abuse my opponents ; let them do all the abusing and trading. I am going to win, and I want as little hard feeling as possible after it is all over. Don't listen to any offers of compromise. We are standing up for our principles. 'Sink or swim, live or die,' I am in this fight to the end to keep that accursed thing of slavery out of free soil and the Democratic party." Mr. Hamlin's words inspired his followers with new zeal and courage, and thereafter he often said of his active supporters in this campaign, "No man ever had more devoted friends." Among the group who stood close to him now were a number of men who were known in their day as faithful and creditable legislators. In the Senate was Paulinus M. Foster, of North Anson, the president ; Noah Prince, of Buckfield ; Robert A. Chapman, of Bethel ; Sheldon Hobbs, of North Berwick ; Thomas M. Morrow, of Searsport ; William Milliken, of Burnham ; James Lancaster, of Northport ; Benjamin Rhea, of Brooksville ; Amos Pickard, of Hampden ; William R. Hersey, of Lincoln, and Nehemiah Bartlett, of Garland. In the House were Samuel Belcher, of Farmington, the speaker ; George P. Sewall, of Old Town ; Samuel Jordan, of Westbrook ; John Goodell, of Hampden ; Ebenezer Knowlton, of Montville ; Daniel Rogers, of Windham ; Daniel Chamberlain, of Bristol ; Jeremiah Tolman, of Rockland ; Wyer G. Sargent, of Sedgwick ; Josiah Harmon, of Thorn-dyke ; Lorin D. Hayes, then of Garland, and General William S. Cochran, of Waldoboro. These men with those already mentioned formed a veritable body-guard in this fight, and Mr. Hamlin never forgot them. The majority followed him into the Republican party.

The coalition, having control of the situation, forced a resolution through the legislature by a narrow majority, postponing the election of senator for a month—until June 25. This gave the Hunkers more time to make trouble, and they improved their opportunity. The day Mr. Hamlin left Augusta to return to Washington, he met Charles Stackpole, the editor of a Portland Free-Soil newspaper, who asked him his views about the scheme that Stephen A. Douglas was advocating to annex Cuba to the United States. Douglas's object was to strengthen himself with the slave power ; but while Mr. Hamlin did not entertain a high opinion of Douglas and his policy, he nevertheless refrained from discussing this matter, for the reason that he did not wish to introduce any more issues in his senatorial campaign. Mr. Hamlin contented himself with alluding to his attitude towards slavery. His exact words were : "My course towards slavery is well known. I have taken that course and I will adhere to it, 'sink or swim, live or die.' " Mr. Stackpole published a correct report of the interview, and the incident should have ended there. But the



Hunkers saw an advantage offered them, and although the course of procedure involved was unscrupulous and dishonorable in the extreme, they seized the opportunity presented. At this time the public mind was easily inflamed against the Abolitionists; they were bitterly denounced as disunionists and marplots. While they were animated by the purest of motives, it is nevertheless a question for the philosophical historians to decide whether the Abolitionists were a help or a hindrance to the men who actually exterminated slavery, however much their agitation contributed to forcing the issue. To charge an anti-slavery leader of Mr. Hamlin's status at this time with sympathizing with the Abolitionists, who advocated disunion, and called the Constitution "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell,"<sup>1</sup> was a gross libel on him and an insult to the thousands of men who supported anti-slavery leaders. But this is what the pro-slavery Democrats in their desperation did charge against Mr. Hamlin. The fact that Mr. Hamlin had given an interview to a Free-Soil newspaper was proof to the blind that he was an Abolitionist; they could not see that the incident served the pro-slavery leaders as a pretext to malign Mr. Hamlin. So a wave of passion swept over the pro-slavery party; their newspapers shrieked in leaded type that Hamlin was an Abolitionist! Even two months after this crusade was started the "Bangor Democrat," in common with newspapers of its kind, kept up the charge. Here is one extract from its issue of July 23, 1850, which shows how willfully Mr. Hamlin was misrepresented in consequence of the Stackpole interview:—

"Mr. Hamlin has for years been engaged in the unholy work of agitation, and in bringing the Union into danger; if nine tenths of the people are ready to say, Never again introduce into our conventions resolutions touching the question of slavery, they must also be prepared to say, Do not elect Mr. Hamlin senator, for he is one of the chief agitators and false friends of the Union. . . . He has trifled with the Union and the Democratic party too much to be rewarded with an important office for six years. To elect him would be to offer a large bounty to those who would imperil the Union."

The balloting for senator began on June 20, with the House leading off; the Senate followed five days later. The Hunkers, still in a quandary over their candidate, made an audacious move to seduce Governor Hubbard into accepting their nomination by voting for him. On the first ballot 149 votes were cast; 75 were necessary for a choice. Mr. Hamlin received 67, eight less than was needed for an election. The Hunkers threw 20 votes for Hubbard; the Whigs, 42 for George Evans; the Free-Soilers or Abolitionists, 15 for General Fessenden; and the rest were scattering. The next day Governor

<sup>1</sup> William Lloyd Garrison.

Hubbard wrote a letter forbidding the use of his name, and urging the Democrats to support the regular nominee. The Hunkers then concentrated on John Anderson, the man Mr. Hamlin predicted they would have to take up. The Senate balloted five times on June 25. Mr. Hamlin received 13 votes, or three short of a majority; Mr. Evans had seven; Mr. Anderson six, General Fessenden four and five. The first test demonstrated, therefore, that ten Hunkers had the balance of power, if the contest continued a straight party fight. If ten Hunkers would vote for Mr. Hamlin they could elect him. The pro-slavery men made a point of this, as will appear later.

A week's balloting followed without a result. The Senate made eleven attempts to break the deadlock, the House ten. It would be tedious reading if the details of the voting were recorded. It is sufficient to say that with a single exception, when Mr. Hamlin came within four votes of an election in the House, the situation remained unchanged. At the end of the week, when the coalition found that Mr. Hamlin's forces could not be broken, the election was again postponed for a month, after another sharp fight and close vote. The Hunkers' object this time was to renew their struggle to rescind Mr. Hamlin's resolutions of instructions. But their Whig allies deserted them on this move, and the legislature by an overwhelming vote reaffirmed the principle laid down by Mr. Hamlin. Still the Hunkers persevered. They tried a trick. Some of their Bangor friends drew up resolutions that pretended to reaffirm Mr. Hamlin's resolutions, but which stopped short of actual instructions. The plan was to rush this bogus affair through the legislature, if they could catch it napping. John S. Chadwick got hold of a copy of the resolutions before they were set in type in the office of the "Bangor Democrat." When the printed articles arrived at Augusta, there was a roar of laughter from Mr. Hamlin's friends.

And now the Hunkers began to talk once more of compromise; they sang of harmony;<sup>1</sup> they said Mr. Hamlin could be elected if he would give up his resolutions of instructions; all he needed was ten votes! But the die was cast; the end of the long fight was near. Mr. Hamlin had made a strong fight for reelection as a strict party man, and for two months his forces had worked according to party usages. He was the choice of the majority of his party, and his reelection had been prevented by a minority that had adopted irregular and unscrupulous methods. He had won a moral victory, and was now justified in accepting help outside of party lines. He did this.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin wrote Mr. Haines on July 4, 1850: "When I was at Augusta, I was sounded on rescinding the resolutions of last year." He replied: "I will obey your instructions, or resign." He added to Haines: "You must not consent to place me in a position which will demand of me an acquiescence in the extension of slavery."

There were about twenty Free-Soilers or Abolitionists in the legislature. The majority would have voted for Mr. Hamlin at any time if they were certain their votes could elect him. But they were good enough politicians to know that their open support of Mr. Hamlin might repel strict party Democrats, who were voting for him because he was their regular nominee. Then again, while there were enough Free-Soilers in the House to elect Mr. Hamlin in that body, it was doubtful whether three of the Free-Soilers in the Senate, or just the number needed, would vote for him. Two were certain of helping; one was uncertain, and all depended on this man. He was a cautious old man by the name of Ozias Blanchard, of the town of Blanchard. At this juncture General Samuel Fessenden, Mr. Hamlin's former law preceptor, Joshua R. Giddings, and Neal Dow came to Mr. Hamlin's aid.<sup>1</sup> Another who aided Mr. Hamlin at this time was Isaac Dyer, of Baldwin, long a powerful leader in the politics of Maine. He was then an anti-slavery Whig, and afterwards a Republican. Mr. Hamlin spoke of Mr. Dyer as one of the ablest politicians he ever knew, and a friend as true as steel. General Fessenden was the nominee of the Free-Soil party, and it is not necessary to say that he was loyal to it; but he had no hope of an election, and it angered him to see the pro-slavery Democrats persecute Senator Hamlin for fighting slavery. Fessenden corresponded with Giddings and brought their joint influence to bear on Blanchard. They convinced him that it was his duty to help Mr. Hamlin, and finally he consented.

Mr. Hamlin's success seemed now assured. But something happened that threatened shipwreck at the last moment. The legislature had voted to resume balloting for senator on July 25, and in the time that elapsed after the trial in June, one of Mr. Hamlin's friends in the House, Lorin D. Hayes, of Garland, was seized with a bad attack of typhoid fever, and was now dangerously ill. But Hayes was one of those simple, faithful men willing to trust all to a leader who their hearts tell them is true. Hayes sent word to his friends in the House: "Any time my vote will elect Hannibal Hamlin to the United States Senate, I will come to the House, if you have to carry me on my dying bed."

On July 25 the House prepared to take a ballot. When the result was announced, Mr. Hamlin had received 75 votes out of 150, or one short of an election. A score or more of men dashed out of the House in an instant, and bolted into Hayes's room. Picking him up, bed and

<sup>1</sup> The author is indebted to General Dow for a personal account of this incident. Neal Dow was already a leader at this early period, and was noted for his immense will power and devotion to principle. He was an influential factor in this battle, and his friendship with Mr. Hamlin was never broken. See his *Reminiscences*.



all, they moved as rapidly as it was safe to the House. When they appeared with the sick man on his bed, pandemonium reigned for a moment among the anti-slavery Democrats. The next ballot was taken amidst breathless excitement, and when it was announced that Mr. Hamlin was elected, having received 77 votes, his friends were wild with joy. Then there was a rush to the senate chamber just as that body was preparing to ballot.

The situation in the Senate at this juncture was very delicate. Of the thirteen senators who voted for Mr. Hamlin, two had been led away from him once on the issue raised over the instructions to congressmen. They were conservative on the slavery question, but voted for Mr. Hamlin as the regular nominee. There was grave danger that they might bolt him if they had learned the Free-Soilers were going to vote for him. It was indeed suspected that one of them would have opposed Mr. Hamlin, if his constituents had not remonstrated with him over his course in voting with the coalition to postpone the election.

Blanchard was the leader of the Free-Soil men, and they agreed to look to him for instructions and signals. The Senate prepared to ballot, when the cheers from the House announced that Mr. Hamlin had won in that body. Blanchard looked at his coadjutors on the other side of the chamber, and, placing his left hand in his side coat pocket, pulled out a ballot. This was the signal, though of course the Hunkers did not suspect it. Blanchard and Newman T. Allen,<sup>1</sup> of Industry, cast their votes for Mr. Hamlin, while a third Free-Soiler threw a blank vote, and two did not vote at all. Thus, 29 votes were cast, and Mr. Hamlin, having 15, or a majority, was elected. This was accomplished and announced so quickly that the Hunkers sat as if in a dream. They had not suspected that the Free-Soilers would come over this time. They sat sullen and dejected, while the happy, exultant Hamlin men made the senate chamber ring with their cheers.

There was great jubilation among the anti-slavery people of Maine, irrespective of party, over Mr. Hamlin's triumph. The Democrats rang bells, and lighted fires along the hilltops. The anti-slavery press throughout the country generally rejoiced over Mr. Hamlin's reëlection. Perhaps the most interesting comment made at the time was one that appeared in the "New York Evening Post," edited by William Cullen Bryant, which was then the leading organ of the Wright Democracy of the Empire State. Mr. Hamlin met Bryant soon after he entered Congress. Though not meeting frequently, their relations were very cordial. The editorial was as follows:—

<sup>1</sup> Charles J. Talbot and George W. Whitney arranged a private Free-Soil meeting at Farmington, to which Mr. Allen was invited. Mr. Talbot read Mr. Hamlin's anti-slavery speeches, and this won Mr. Allen's vote for Mr. Hamlin.

“With examples of treachery and faltering around him for the past three years, Mr. Hamlin has not swerved a hair’s breadth from the rectitude of his course as an opponent of slavery extension in every shape in which the scheme has presented itself. His reelection was resisted by the Hunker Democrats upon this ground alone. He had been true to his professions and to the principles of the party before the propagandism of this institution was foisted and intruded into its success. He might have trimmed and temporized and secured success without effort, but he chose to make no concessions. He was nobly sustained by his friends, and notwithstanding the open and continued defection and desertion of the Hunkers, has triumphed over them by just the requisite number of votes. He is a safe, rational, and comprehensive statesman.”<sup>1</sup>

But the result of this contest in Maine had more than a personal or local significance, which is readily recognized when the contemporary happenings of the day are considered. Mr. Hamlin’s return to the United States Senate, by a union of anti-slavery Democrats and Free-Soilers, was accomplished about the same time as Thomas H. Benton’s defeat in Missouri for reelection to the Senate, after thirty years’ service in that body, by a combination of pro-slavery Democrats and Whigs; and these events were followed by Charles Sumner’s first election to the Senate, in the succeeding January, by the united votes of Free-Soil Whigs and anti-slavery Democrats. The anti-slavery people of the North were coming together; the pro-slavery people of the South were joining forces. The Republican party of the North and the aggressive pro-slavery Democracy of the South were forming.

Finally, Mr. Hamlin’s vindication furnished evidence of the disposition and ability of the Northern masses to support leaders who were right on the slavery issue, in the face of great obstacles and inducements to act against them. It must be remembered that every national administration since 1840, except that of General Taylor, had favored the extension of slavery into free soil, or had yielded in part to the demands of the slave power; the fact must not be forgotten that great Northern statesmen and powerful party leaders, such as Webster, Cass, and Douglas, counseled compromise or surrender on the slavery issue; it must also be borne in mind that the Democratic party was now a great machine in the hands of the slavery propagandists, and was bribing the press and politicians with patronage to support its policy; it is necessary, also, to consider the influence of the conservative element at the North, that feared a change and protested against the agitation of the slavery issue; yet, when it would

<sup>1</sup> It may be said, on the authority of Parke Godwin, that Bryant wrote this editorial.

have been easier to compromise, when Webster's courage failed him, and Cass and Douglas tried to obscure the issue with their sophistries, when great commercial interests allied themselves with the slave oligarchy, the Northern masses saw their duty clearly, and followed the right leaders to the end. The slavery question at this period was peculiarly complicated. The intelligent and sympathetic coöperation that anti-slavery leaders such as Mr. Hamlin received from the rank and file of their party at this time is in itself a striking proof of the ability of a people reared under the influence of free institutions to govern themselves, and decide civic and moral problems of vital importance to the State and untold generations to come.



## CHAPTER XXII

### PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1852

THE approach of the presidential campaign of 1852 made the Democratic party anxious for harmony, and the leaders began to work to this end soon after the compromise measures of 1850 had an effect of quietude on the country. While it may never be known what the leaders in the inner circles of the slave oligarchy plotted and planned in advance of the Democratic National Convention of 1852, it is certain that, with the possible exception of these marplots, the Democratic party was desirous of a reconciliation on the basis of the compromise plan. The sincerity of the party in this respect cannot be doubted. The leaders of the wing to which Colonel Benton and Senator Hamlin belonged accepted the situation in good faith, and initiated a movement to nominate Levi Woodbury, of New Hampshire, for President. Woodbury's untimely death in September, 1851, nine months before the convention, renders speculation futile as to his chances of the nomination; yet the incident may be reviewed with profit, since the Woodbury movement assumed formidable proportions, and seemed to promise success. There is also a little history connected with it that has never before been published, and which throws some light behind the scenes on the Democratic party.

Mr. Hamlin was both a practical statesman and politician. The situation that was presented and his duty were equally clear to him. He decided to remain with his party and strive for the nomination of a man for President who in his opinion possessed the requisite ability, training, honesty, and firmness to maintain the existing balance of conditions in regard to slavery that had been established under the Constitution and the Clay compromises. He made a reservation in the case of the Fugitive Slave Law that has already been explained. He thought that Woodbury fulfilled the necessary qualifications, and he had a high personal regard for the distinguished jurist. The consideration of availability also influenced Mr. Hamlin to favor Woodbury. He had peculiar qualifications in this respect. He came down from the Jacksonian era; he had been a senator, a cabinet officer; he was now an able member of the United States Supreme Court; he occupied middle ground on the slavery question, and finally was a

New England man. Then, again, the candidacies of Cass, Buchanan, and Douglas would make Woodbury the best man in Mr. Hamlin's opinion, by the simple process of exclusion. He once voted for Cass under protest, and he never favored Buchanan or Douglas for the presidency. Some men, who appeared to know more about Mr. Hamlin's affairs than he did, asserted that he favored Douglas at this time. This story, indeed, was published in the Portland "Argus." The truth is that while Mr. Hamlin might prefer pleasant rather than unpleasant personal relations with Douglas as a brother senator and party colleague, he regarded the "Little Giant" as a tricky and insincere politician, whose success in hoodwinking upright and able men he always regretted.

The story of Woodbury's campaign begins with the spring of 1851. After Benton's retirement from the Senate he was elected to the House, and he and Mr. Hamlin maintained their close personal and party relations. It was understood that Colonel Benton was to promote Woodbury's interests throughout the West and South, while Senator Hamlin was to direct the campaign in New England; at the same time Benton arranged to supervise the editorial conduct of the canvass. He gave the key to Woodbury's followers by apostrophizing the jurist as the "rock of New England Democracy." The New Hampshire Democrats formally opened the campaign by presenting Judge Woodbury as New England's candidate. The plan was to have other States follow. Correspondence between Benton and Hamlin throws some light on the inside situation. Benton wrote to Mr. Hamlin from Washington, June 16: "I suppose you see from the papers that I am here and what I am about, namely, making a history of the workings of the government for the thirty years I was in the Senate, being a selection of my speeches, with historical notes and illustrations. But this does not interfere with other works—the redemption of the State of Missouri from the Whigs and nullifiers—and the presidential election. It is on the latter point I now write to you. The State of New Hampshire has given through her Democracy a unanimous nomination to Woodbury. This is a good start. I can draw up an article for the papers which will back it, and be understood and felt by the people. I spoke of him (Woodbury) to all my friends in the West, and always with the best effect. The time has fully come to act. A paper here is essential. You know all my views on that point, and I wish to know what are its prospects. Of course Mr. Woodbury can have nothing to do with it. His friends must act. I shall be here for a month or so, and can give some attention to the matter. I shall draw up an article anyhow. Where do you think it had best be published? My mind vibrates between Maine and Missouri. Which say you? If Maine, I would send it to

you to convey to a paper. I feel like I could make a pretty strong article."

There was a strong sentiment in favor of Judge Woodbury among the Democrats of Maine who followed Mr. Hamlin; but at the same time some of his old friends were greatly desirous of supporting a movement for Sam Houston. Mr. Hamlin believed in Houston<sup>1</sup> and liked him as a man, but he saw that Houston was not available. In his letters to Judge R. D. Rice, William P. Haines, and others, he pointed out that the very qualities and acts of Houston which had evoked admiration at the North — his opposition to the extension of slavery, his attitude towards the Calhoun party — would be arguments used against him in the South. On the other hand, he dwelt on the Hunker opposition in Maine to Woodbury as a point in his favor. He believed that Woodbury would veto any measure extending slavery. Mr. Hamlin's arguments prevailed, and his friends all went for Woodbury.

In the mean time, Senator Hamlin became anxious about the New York Democracy, and in June, 1851, he wrote Benton. The latter replied the 26th of that month as follows:—

"In answer to your inquiry respecting the disposition of our friends in New York, I feel myself justified in answering affirmatively; but to give you a kind of assurance which will leave no doubt, you will soon receive a communication from our friend Blair, who will go on to New York.

"I have sketched an article, and as it amplifies, under one of its heads, the claim of New England mentioned in the New Hampshire nomination, I deem it best to let it appear as a New England article, and therefore will send it to you for one of your papers.

"I am fixed in my opinion about the necessity of a paper here. Unless we have an organ here to collect and distribute intelligence, we will hardly be able to make Mr. W. accepted as a candidate at all. Be assured he has nothing to expect from any paper here but viperous attacks from the Republicans, and no defense from the 'Union,' or worse than none. It should not be set up as an opposition paper to the 'Union,' but a helper. The Whigs have two, and they are supported by the whole power of the administration; and the Democracy should have two. That is a public reason to be given. Another public reason for its open advocacy of Mr. W. should be the venomous attacks upon him here, repeated in all the administration papers throughout the United States, and which the 'Union' would not undertake to answer without seeming to become the advocate of one of the candidates — which it professes not to become. Submission to the majority of a national convention should be a point maintained in the paper. Not only not a word against other candidates, but a defense of them; the harmony and reconciliation of the party to be made a leading point. The article

<sup>1</sup> Senator Hamlin wrote to A. M. Robinson, "How I would like to go for old Sam!"



which I shall send you touches these and other points ; and in my opinion chalks out a good line for the new paper.

"Without such a paper I do not see that we can do anything. A daily attack upon a man, from the centre to the circumference, and no defense, and he must be overwhelmed."

Benton wrote Mr. Hamlin another letter the same day : —

"I send you the article mentioned. It is deemed by friends, as well as by myself, best that it should appear in a New England paper, and it is drawn up as a New England article. The paper that contains it should be published in numbers, and a copy sent to every Democratic paper in the Union. Besides sending it direct to the papers from the office with the article marked, it should be sent to friends in different States to see to the publication of it. Send some to me.

"From further advices I adhere to my declaration that our friends in New York will come in. I have also spoken with friends in the South with good prospects."

Benton's editorial was a brilliant presentation of Woodbury's qualifications for the presidency, but it is of noteworthy interest in only one respect, aside from its general merits, and this may be mentioned. Mr. Hamlin had it published in several newspapers in Maine. One was the "Bangor Jeffersonian," his organ. Benton claimed that the slavery question was settled. In commenting on this, the "Jeffersonian" reflected Mr. Hamlin's views by dissenting from Colonel Benton's conclusions, though indorsing his support of Woodbury.

But, alas ! for the plans of men. When it appeared morally certain that Woodbury would go into the Democratic convention with the support of New England, and with the good prospect of uniting all factions on himself, he was seized with a fatal illness that terminated in a week. Mr. Hamlin always spoke of Woodbury's death as a great blow to the Democracy at a critical period. True, Woodbury voted for the annexation of Texas, but he believed that slavery was a sectional institution, and while he would not interfere with it where it existed, he was opposed to the Calhoun doctrine. Knowing Mr. Woodbury as well as he did, Mr. Hamlin spoke with authority when he said Judge Woodbury would oppose any scheme to extend or disturb slavery in the event of his election to the presidency. Thus if Levi Woodbury had been President instead of Franklin Pierce, his firmness, honesty, and loyalty would have been unconquerable obstacles to the conspirators who broke down the Missouri Compromise. But those who see the hand of fate in the affairs of men believe that Pierce was but an instrument in bringing on the crisis which rid the country of a loathsome institution it could throw off only through a gigantic convulsion.

Woodbury's death set the New England Democracy at sea. A

little talk was heard about Franklin Pierce, but that was at first believed to mean that he was thinking of becoming a candidate for Vice-President. For several months, General William O. Butler, of Kentucky, was seriously considered by Benton, Hamlin, and their associates as the most available man of the hour. Butler was a man of decided ability, forceful character, picturesque personality, and natural qualities of leadership. He also had a record that might have made him a popular candidate. He distinguished himself by his gallantry at the battle of New Orleans, where he was one of Andrew Jackson's right-hand men; he had served in the House with credit; he was ranked as one of the leaders at the Kentucky bar, and he had demonstrated his personal strength among the masses of his State in 1844 by reducing the Whig majority from 20,000 to 5000, as the Democratic candidate for governor, the year Henry Clay made his strongest run for the presidency. Butler was believed to be opposed to the extension of slavery. His refusal of the governorship of Nebraska in 1855 under the Pierce administration was convincing evidence of this. In short, while Butler was not regarded as a great statesman, he was thought to possess the ability and character requisite for the presidency and certain possibilities of popularity with the masses. Finally, it was believed that he could keep the peace on the slavery question.

Colonel Benton wrote Mr. Hamlin the following interesting letter about Butler on October 12, 1851:—

"I have thought over what you say in relation to Butler, and felt no objection to him on that score. I have but a poor opinion of what is called talents in the United States, and by which is generally understood some capacity for speaking and writing without much regard to the judgment and moral qualities, without which speaking and writing are empty or pernicious. Moral qualities are the first thing with me in a public man; common sense and common judgment will do the rest. I could name thousands I would be willing to take for President; but they have not the national name which would carry them before the people. It was the remark of Dean Swift, himself a man of genius and the friend of the two greatest political geniuses of the day, and in relation to their miscarriages, that genius was not necessary in administering government, and was often hurtful; and that common sense, honesty of purpose, were all that were necessary. This is my opinion, and Butler under that aspect is fully qualified. But there is another consideration which was a pretty controlling one, when I came into Congress, in the minds of the old Democracy, and that was the soundness of his (a statesman's) associates. He must not only be sound himself, but have sound associates; as every President must be more or less in the hands of his friends. Under this aspect Butler is safe. He has no connection with any clique, fragment, or faction, and was voted for by all without a word as Vice-President (in the conven-

tion of '48, that nominated Cass and Butler). Most of them want him for V. P. now. But the overruling idea at present with all our friends is a new man, one that has had nothing to do with late events, and, therefore, has no section arrayed against him. That idea brought out for Woodbury was doing an immensity for him, and Butler, who was to have been V. P. on his ticket, now falls heir to it. He is a *new* man, and has nothing against him, and has great personal popularity. It is believed that he can unite every Democratic State, and carry the two Whig States of Kentucky and Tennessee. Who can you name in N. E. for V. P. if he is taken up? I go to Missouri in three weeks, and will be glad to hear from you again."

About this time a number of Judge Woodbury's former leading supporters in New England held several conferences at Boston to further General Butler's candidacy. Charles Levi Woodbury, son of the jurist, was already coming forward as a leader in the Boston Democracy. He was Mr. Hamlin's lifelong friend. Mr. Hamlin on several occasions found Mr. Woodbury a safe and sound adviser. In the fisheries incident, for example, Mr. Woodbury furnished Senator Hamlin with valuable data and information. Mr. Woodbury took part in the Butler movement, and in a personal letter to the author, under date of August 4, 1896, gave some interesting facts concerning the chief conference at Boston. An understanding was reached to favor the nominations of General Butler for President and General Franklin Pierce, of New Hampshire, for Vice-President. Mr. Woodbury also noted that for the next few months the New Hampshire Democracy continued to support Butler and Pierce in such a way that Pierce might be placed at the head of the ticket or the foot. They had the idea that Pierce instead of Butler should fall heir to the Woodbury movement, and they worked to this end.

But the Butler movement was destined to failure. The reasons may not be detailed. The incident is noticed for the purpose of emphasizing the course that Senator Hamlin, Colonel Benton, and men of their kind pursued in the hope of saving the Democracy from falling completely into the hands of the slavery propagandists. It may be said, briefly, that Butler was not the kind of man the Southern Democracy wanted. There was now a new Southern Democracy, but that fact was not fully grasped by the anti-Calhoun wing. Its leaders were aggressive; undoubtedly they had a secret understanding among themselves to force the nomination of a man who would do their bidding, — break down the Missouri Compromise. This was of course not even suspected at the time, and will be more fully alluded to in the proper place. These leaders were determined to reject the Democracy of Jefferson, Macon, Pinckney, and Jackson. They therefore likewise rejected the followers of the apostle of the true Democracy, which would uphold the Constitution, and give slavery only the



rights granted it by that instrument. The memory of Jackson was growing hateful to them. Did not Old Hickory say in his dying hours that posterity would never forgive him for not hanging John C. Calhoun when he attempted to withdraw South Carolina from the Union when Jackson was President? Why, then, should they listen to Benton, and make Butler President,—a man who was one of the last of the iron Jackson stock?

Although there were many Butler delegates elected to the Democratic National Convention, it was apparent a few months before the convention assembled in June, 1852, that Butler lacked support in the South, and he practically retired from the contest. Nevertheless, some of Butler's friends decided to keep him in reserve, so to speak, in the hope that if the convention came to a deadlock over the more prominent candidates, it might unite on Butler. Senator Hamlin was one of these men. He was a delegate from Maine. He was as strongly opposed as ever to the nomination of Cass, Buchanan, Douglas, Marcy, or Jefferson Davis, who were most conspicuously before the convention until the last ballot,—the forty-ninth. Charles Levi Woodbury, who was present with Mr. Hamlin, afterward recalled the fact that the Maine delegation was divided, but that Senator Hamlin, Lot M. Morrill, who was later his colleague in the Senate, and Colonel A. W. H. Clapp, of Portland, all acted together.

After the convention had struggled several days to make a choice, it became apparent that it would be necessary to take a new man. When the convention was in a mood to recognize the situation, the current beneath the surface turned in favor of Franklin Pierce. There were several factors that were instrumental in causing this result. The futility of continuing the deadlock was obvious; the necessity of selecting a new man was clear. The New England Democracy was clamorous to have a New England man chosen, and preferred Pierce. Their claims appeared to be the final consideration that tipped the scales in Pierce's favor; but in reality they were surface evidence, though astute observers of political affairs were deceived by them. The probable truth is, Pierce owed his nomination to a secret understanding between himself and the Calhoun Democracy, which was guarded so carefully that only the subsequent acts of Pierce as President exposed and at the same time proved its existence. His managers in the convention carefully held him back until the last moment, when they rushed him into nomination amidst great enthusiasm, and he was chosen practically by acclamation. William R. King, an amiable and well-liked senator of Alabama, was chosen for Vice-President, the compromise measures of 1850 were indorsed, and the Democracy, united for the last time in ante-bellum days, went forth to do battle against the Whigs.

The Whig party was now at the end of its career. Signs of approaching dissolution were manifested in its presidential convention, which was the scene of a bitter struggle between various factions. President Fillmore desired the nomination, and so did Webster, his secretary of state. But a large element favored General Winfield Scott, and he was finally chosen. The chances of success seemed well divided at the opening of the campaign. But the Whigs were doomed. The people, having made up their minds to try the compromise measures of 1850, saw that the Democracy, which had enacted them, should be intrusted with their enforcement. The Whig temple was also badly shaken by the fall of its two great pillars, Webster and Clay, who both died during the campaign. The final cause of General Scott's defeat was his persistence in making vain and pompous speeches. The hero of Lundy's Lane and Buena Vista was out of his element. Ridicule was turned on him and his defeat was overwhelming. He carried only four States. Mr. Hamlin earnestly supported Pierce as a party man, though he afterwards regretted this as one of the mistakes of his life, and said so.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PIERCE ADMINISTRATION

FEW men have come to the presidency under apparently brighter auspices and with a larger measure of good-will from the American public than Franklin Pierce. The general impression was that with General Pierce's inauguration an era of peace had been ushered in, and that the new President would be the last to disturb it. In his letter of acceptance, Mr. Pierce had pledged himself to abide by the compromise measures; in his inaugural address on March 4, 1853, he reaffirmed these pledges, and in his first message to Congress, December 5, 1853, he reverted to his promise, and speaking of the repose the nation enjoyed, declared that it should suffer no shock from any act of his, if he had the power to avert it. These words naturally created greater confidence in President Pierce, and greater interest in him personally. He seemed to fill the public ideal in some respects as to what the President of a young nation should be. He was the youngest chief magistrate the country had yet chosen, and he was brilliant, eloquent, magnetic, handsome, and democratic. He seemed to be the personification of Young America, and even when the blackest pages of his administration were being written, Mr. Pierce maintained a strong popularity among those who knew him and fell under the charm of his personality.

But with all his gifts, and in spite of his opportunities, Franklin Pierce was the greatest failure and disappointment in the presidency the country had experienced. Yet he was President nearly a year before his weak nature was fully understood. This was a year, though, of comparative calm. Mr. Hamlin became well acquainted with General Pierce, and at first liked him. He was slow to change his opinion of the President. That was his nature. Then again it is to be said that President Pierce took great pains to make himself agreeable to Mr. Hamlin in order to win his support and friendship. But this is a story for another page. While Mr. Hamlin gave President Pierce his friendship, it is certain that he, in common with the Democrats of his school, regretted to find Pierce surrounded by a cabinet of the strongest pro-slavery sympathies, and also that the President was still inclined to pursue John P. Hale with oldtime vindictiveness. Yet the anti-Calhoun wing were fair to the young President and gave him



full credit for sincerity in professing a desire to preserve peace on the slavery question.

Franklin Pierce's betrayal of his solemnly plighted words was due to his pliant, fickle nature and environments. He was dazzled by the pomp and splendor of his great office, and received the tributes paid to him as due him as an individual. He seems to have had a fatuous idea of his power, for he allowed himself to be carried into scandalous convivial excesses. He soon learned to listen only to the voice of the sycophant, who spoke the truth to him. Mr. Pierce easily fell into the hands of those who wanted to use him. They sang his praises and painted the possibilities of his reelection with consummate art. Always a strong partisan, Mr. Pierce was soon inflated with inordinate ambition, and lent himself to the plans of his unscrupulous advisers. He saw only one side, and in the end gave the slave oligarchy all that a President could. Yet he had strong men in his Cabinet, who advised against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. One was Mr. Marcy, the secretary of state, and he had always been a Hunker. Another conservative member was James Guthrie, of Kentucky, the secretary of the treasury, who was a true Union man, and whose ability and upright character were conceded and recognized by all who knew him. Robert McClelland, of Michigan, the secretary of the interior, was one of the few Democrats in the House who supported the Wilmot Proviso, and James Campbell, of Pennsylvania, the postmaster-general, was another highly respected member. But the men who eventually were closest to Mr. Pierce were Jefferson Davis, secretary of war, and Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, the attorney-general. Davis was the *deus ex machina* of the ill-fated Pierce administration, and Cushing its tool.

But this was the man who was as yet behind the scenes, and it was not until the machinery of the slavery propagandists was set in motion that he was placed on the stage of action in the light of publicity. To carry the simile further, it must be said that the plot to break down the Missouri Compromise unfolded like a Sardou drama. The first schemes of the conspirators that were presented in Congress were not understood in their actual purpose. It was not until the plot had been fully developed in debate that the full purport was grasped. Even to this day all the details of this conspiracy in its inception, the concoction of the secret bargain between Pierce and the Calhoun Democracy before his nomination, the development of the plan of action from day to day, and its termination in the wholesale purchase of Northern senators and representatives by patronage, will never be learned. But it is enough for this narrative to say that the chief odium of this act rests equally on the shoulders of Franklin Pierce and Stephen A. Douglas.

It has been well said that Pierce and Douglas ran a race for the presidency. This is a terse description of their conduct and an explanation of their motives for doing the work of the slave oligarchy. With Pierce in the presidency, and Douglas chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, the slave power knew that it had two men who would do its bidding in return for the great reward it promised, — the presidency. What the slave party wanted was the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise, that it might seize more territory for slavery. The most important result of the Mexican war was the addition of a large free State to the Union, — California. This was the irony of fate. The free States now not only exceeded the slave States in number, population, territory, and wealth, but promised in the near future to exercise the political power of government. The slave party laid longing eyes on the territory that now comprises the States of Kansas and Nebraska, and, to quote Mr. Hamlin, the plot of "infinite mischief" was conceived.

In the waning hours of the Fillmore administration a bill was introduced in the Senate to organize a government in Nebraska. Senator Douglas reported it, but it was killed by the votes of the pro-slavery senators under different pleas. This did not attract much attention, and the matter did not come up again until Congress met for the first time under Mr. Pierce's administration, December, 1853. It was afterwards recalled that the first bill Mr. Douglas presented recognized the Missouri Compromise; it was also remembered that in 1850 Douglas said in a speech to his Illinois constituents, "I am prepared to stand or fall by our American Union, clinging with the tenacity of life to all its glorious memories of the past; . . . and among the memories of the past I pronounce the Missouri Compromise of 1820 to be one." After the beginning of the Pierce administration Douglas experienced a change of mind: he resolved that the Missouri Compromise should in fact be a memory of the past.

There was quick work. On January 4, 1854, Senator Douglas reported the Nebraska bill again, with the significant declaration that the question of slavery, according to the compromises of 1850, should be left to the people of the territories to decide. This declaration was untrue, but it was a step towards the new ground on which Mr. Douglas meant to plant himself. On January 16, Archibald Dixon, who by a strange fate had succeeded Henry Clay, the peacemaker, as a senator from Kentucky, moved that the bill be made a special order for the following Monday, giving notice of his intention to move that "the Missouri Compromise be repealed, and that the citizens of the several States be at liberty to take and hold their slaves within any of the territories." Mr. Dixon added that on "this question of slavery I know no Whig party, no Democratic party. I am a

pro-slavery man, and represent pro-slavery constituents. I intend to promote slavery interests as far as I can. This bill, if adopted, will carry out these principles."

Dixon's declaration was at first regarded as the expression of individuals rather than of a party, but events rapidly dissipated this mistaken idea. Senator Dixon's proposition to repeal the honored landmark of 1820 was the logical outcome of Calhoun's theories and teachings. When Mr. Dixon said that on the question of slavery he knew no Whig party, no Democratic party, he spoke for the vast majority of the people south of the Mason and Dixon line. In the great Democratic landslide of the presidential election many Southern Whigs had renounced their allegiance to their party and taken their place in the Calhoun wing of the Democracy. Mr. Dixon was simply stating the situation, but the facts were a revelation to the slow North. Douglas recognized the state of affairs, and took advantage of it in a characteristic manner. He had no scruples; success was his standard; the presidency his aim. He had no sincerity; politics was to him a game, and slavery at this juncture was the football that was being kicked about. The South was the master, and he hastened to curry its favor. He made his greatest bid for the presidency on January 23, when he reported his territorial bill in its perfected form. This provided for the division of the territory in question into two parts, to be known as Kansas and Nebraska, with the declaration that the Missouri Compromise was null and void, and suspended by the compromise measures of 1850.

Mr. Douglas spent a part of the preceding Saturday and Sunday with President Pierce in consultation over the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and together they developed the measure into the shape in which it was presented in the Senate. There was sharp fencing between them; each was afraid that the other would get ahead of him in the race both were making for Southern favor. More details will be presented in another place; it is enough to state the brief facts now. It would appear that President Pierce was doubtful about the step he was taking; he urged Mr. Douglas to consult with Secretary Marcy. It happened that Mr. Marcy was not at home when Douglas called, and therefore did not probably know that the conspiracy had been planned out until it was too late to arrest it. When Fenton, of New York, saw Mr. Marcy he indicated by his dejected manner and brief speech that he believed a terrible mistake had been made, and that nothing could be done to prevent it. This all happened while Congress was considering the Nebraska bill. The anti-slavery members considered that a bad measure; but they little dreamed that while they were preparing to resist it, the President of the United States and a great leader of the Democracy were plotting to launch a thunderbolt out of the clear sky, as it were.



The repeal of the Missouri Compromise was accomplished partially through the unscrupulous use of patronage by the administration. The men who were instrumental in forcing this corrupt job through Congress believed that "every man has his price." If they applied their false measure to honest men, it was their own mistake. They certainly made a mistake in the case of Senator Hamlin, and their efforts to approach him reacted on them. The plan of influencing Mr. Hamlin to give his support to the Douglas bill was a deep-laid scheme, and was probably the counterpart of others that succeeded with several Northern senators and representatives. President Pierce was directly connected with this plot, and was probably the author. It is referred to now because it was undoubtedly conceived before the Douglas bill was presented in the Senate, before Mr. Hamlin even suspected the deviltry Mr. Pierce was engaged in behind the scenes. There is direct evidence of President Pierce's part in this job and moral evidence that he tried to take advantage of the condition of affairs in Maine to force Mr. Hamlin into line with the miserable creatures who betrayed their States in this disgraceful affair. It was a thumbscrew business.

There was a changed condition of affairs in Maine, and Mr. Hamlin's oldtime enemies, the pro-slavery Democrats, were the cause of it. They had failed to rule, and now they were trying to ruin the Democratic party in their State. They bolted Governor Hubbard in the fall of 1851, when he was a candidate for reelection, because he was instrumental in procuring the enactment of the famous Maine Prohibitory Liquor Law. It was said that the Hunkers wanted "free rum as well as free slave trade." They succeeded in preventing an election by the people, and when the legislature was called on to act, the Hunkers combined with the Whigs, and elected William G. Crosby governor over Dr. Hubbard, and although the latter had a large plurality in the total number of votes thrown by the people. The Hunkers hoped that they could effect a coalition with the Whigs whereby they could elect one of their own men to the Senate to succeed Mr. Bradbury in 1853. They were ready to do business with Franklin Pierce. This was the situation in Maine when the Missouri plot began to develop at Washington.

Mr. Hamlin seems to have had some suspicions at this juncture that President Pierce was not sincere; but he was disposed to be just and generous. His letter to Mr. Haines is good evidence of this. He wrote, among other things:—

"The President is kind and cordial, but I think I can see a fear in his mind that he may yield too much to me; in other words, while he is disposed to give me his confidence, he is still induced, perhaps insensibly, to withhold much of it in consequence of the continued assaults on me by a

class of men in Maine. . . . I mean that the President shall understand that I am entitled to his confidence. He has not treated me right, but no matter. It is our administration, and I say, let us give it a generous support. We have brought it into power, let us take care of it. It is too small business for a man to allow his little disappointments to control his public action. I fear we have too many who do so."

This was December 16, about the time when it is definitely known that President Pierce and Senator Douglas were beginning to consult over the scheme to abrogate the Missouri Compromise. Mr. Hamlin quickly learned why the President was listening to the Hunkers of Maine. On January 23, 1854, Douglas took Congress by surprise by presenting his bill that proposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The anti-slavery senators had had no intimation of what was coming when Douglas took the floor. They were simply aghast when they heard his proposition. Mr. Hamlin could hardly believe the evidence of his senses. Repeal the Missouri Compromise! What next? Would the Calhoun party lay hands on the Constitution itself? The anti-slavery men were sickened and angered; the pro-slavery men were jubilant. Congress was at once in a roar of angry debate. The excitement over the Wilmot Proviso was slight in comparison with that which now agitated the country. The North's amazement turned to indignation, and a storm of wrath arose that was a precursor of the fury which was to burst forth only six years later when the government was assaulted.

When Douglas had finished his memorable speech introducing his bill and urging its adoption on the ground that it would vindicate the principle of "non-intervention," and allow the people of the territories to decide for themselves on the question of slavery, Mr. Hamlin at once sought opportunity to speak with him. He said:—

"Douglas, your bill is a gross moral wrong. In my judgment it would be a bad party measure. It is vicious in principle, and, if enacted, will produce infinite mischief. I shall oppose it. That is all I have to say."<sup>1</sup>

Men who were associated with Mr. Hamlin, and were familiar with his record of consistent opposition to the extension of slavery, knew that he meant precisely what he said. None at Washington but the blind President and his miserable tools supposed for a moment that Mr. Hamlin would support the Douglas bill. Douglas knew that he would oppose it, and, suave politician as he was, accepted Mr. Hamlin's announcement good-naturedly, and said no more at that time. The exciting debate then opened, but Mr. Hamlin, having stated his position authoritatively, turned to other affairs for the present.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin characterized the Douglas bill in similar terms in a letter which was published at this time in the *Boston Commonwealth*.

Having announced in public his intention of opposing the Douglas bill, Mr. Hamlin thought that he had said enough. The proposition to repeal the time-honored bulwark between freedom and slavery was an act of unparalleled perfidy. His position was clearly understood. Two dramatic incidents that happened later reflect Mr. Hamlin's feelings. The debate was to him words, words, and nothing but words. His attitude was one of cold contempt towards this conspiracy against national and party honor. Silence best expressed his feelings. The words of the Roman are recalled: "I have spoken." Then, again, there was work to be done. Mr. Hamlin's laborious duties as chairman of the Committee on Commerce, as well as the peculiar situation in Maine, now claimed his attention.

At this juncture, the State was in a political ferment, and the outcome was in the dark. It is easy now to see that the anti-slavery elements were then coalescing to form the Republican party. This process was going on throughout the North, and Maine, then as now, was always among the first States in the Union to feel and register a moral uprising. At the South the pro-slavery men were uniting. While conditions at the North were in a state of flux, and far-sighted men realized that national questions would sooner or later readjust the American people in new political relations, the anti-slavery Democrats of the Pine Tree State gave their attention to the pressing need of the hour, which was to prevent the Hunkers from electing one of their own men to the Senate. Mr. Hamlin feared this, although it was a remote contingency. The Hunkers and the Whigs had combined to defeat him; they had also combined to elect Mr. Crosby governor. Some of the Whig leaders had persistently misrepresented Mr. Hamlin's position on the Texas question. He was not disposed to trust them. What bargain was to be made between the Whigs and the Hunkers, to reward the latter for electing Mr. Crosby? Nathan Clifford and ex-Governor Dana were active candidates for the Senate to succeed Mr. Bradbury.

Mr. Hamlin accordingly joined with the anti-slavery Democracy in an effort to control the party in 1853. It is interesting to note the kind of a man he favored as his colleague in this crisis. This was William P. Haines, of Biddeford, as has been intimated before. From 1850 to the winter of 1854, Mr. Hamlin strove to induce Mr. Haines to become a candidate for the Senate. In that time Mr. Haines had grown into a leader of recognized ability, judgment, and character. He was entirely in sympathy with Mr. Hamlin on the slavery issue, he was also a strong party man; in fact, he never left the Democracy. He was fine-looking; he had an attractive personality. While Mr. Haines was active in politics, he never sought office. In short, he was one of those strong, upright, unselfish men, who dominate the



inner circles of parties and seek to direct their party in the right course. Mr. Haines was also a scholar of large attainments. A graduate of Dartmouth, he was for many years one of the leading trustees of that institution. His taste inclined him to his home and books. The following extract from a letter that Mr. Haines wrote Mr. Hamlin, in July, 1854, commending his course in the Senate, gives an idea of the man and his relations with Mr. Hamlin : —

“I have very happy reflections when I call to mind how worthily our friend Hamlin fulfills all his friends predicted when he was elected to the Senate. In fact, my dear friend, you have demonstrated how well a man may stand even at Washington, who will respect himself and represent *truly* the will of a *Northern* constituency. I thank God for this ! But enough — May God bless you, and return you in safety to the beloved family circle.”

Mr. Hamlin felt that Mr. Haines had the qualities and peculiar party qualifications which would rally the Democracy around him. He had few enemies ; even the Hunkers thought well of him. But Mr. Haines withstood all pressure, and the Democracy eventually nominated Lot M. Morrill, who had already achieved an honorable status in his party as an anti-slavery man and clear-headed parliamentarian. Again there was no election for governor by the people, although the Democrats controlled the legislature. The situation had too many complications to be described in detail, but a few phrases and results may be presented to illustrate the peculiarities of politics. The year before, the Hunkers, it will be remembered, bolted Governor Hubbard, and by combining with the Whigs made Mr. Crosby governor. This time a group of anti-slavery Democrats<sup>1</sup> bolted their party, and, joining with the Whigs in the legislature, reelected Mr. Crosby and chose William Pitt Fessenden United States senator, although he was a Whig. This bolt was no aspersion on Mr. Morrill's principles. He was defeated by a curious accident of politics. Mr. Hamlin cordially supported Mr. Morrill, and regretted his defeat. The incident has been presented only to show that Mr. Hamlin stuck to his party in its hour of need, and exerted himself to strengthen the anti-slavery party in the Senate. He believed that the election of a good, sound, anti-slavery Democrat to the Senate, — such as Mr. Morrill, — in the midst of the struggle over the Douglas bill, would be a rebuke to the Democratic leaders who were plotting to betray their party. He went to Maine several times before and during the contest at Augusta, to help Morrill. This is one reason why he did not speak during the debate. He was looking for votes. One more Democratic vote against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise would have been worth tomes of speech to him.

<sup>1</sup> These were Know-Nothing men. That party had just begun its brief career in Maine.

But however unkind fate seemed to be to the anti-slavery Democracy of Maine, Fessenden's election proved opportune. He was the leader of the Whigs in the legislature and a member of the House when chosen to the Senate. In shifting his scene of action he remained a leader. When Fessenden delivered his maiden speech in the Senate, — against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, — he stepped into the front ranks of the debaters in Congress. To quote another writer: "The friends of freedom knew that a new champion had arrived." This was the beginning of a career that reflects lustre and honor on the man and his State. Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Fessenden did not maintain close relationship at first; each continued for a few years to act nominally with his old party, but eventually they coöperated in forming the Republican party, in which they remained as leaders to the end of their lives.

When the debate over the Douglas bill in the Senate began to near its close, there were two kinds of Northern Democrats who gave unmistakable evidence of their intention to support Douglas. One was the kind which worshiped the god of party action. The other was the venial sort. General Cass, of Michigan, represented the former. On the adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, he declared that his doctrine of "squatter sovereignty" was vindicated. Another was John Pettit, of Indiana. He once said, in defending the extension of slavery, that the Declaration of Independence was a self-evident lie. A third was Moses Norris, of New Hampshire. Once he upbraided Ben Wade for opposing the Fugitive Slave Law. Wade coolly inquired of Norris whether he would help catch a "nigger" if summoned to do so by an officer of the law. Norris replied in some confusion that he would. Wade turned to Archibald Dixon, and asked him the same question. "No; I would be damned if I would," was the frank reply. "Then," rejoined Wade, "I don't see why you Southern gentlemen should catch niggers, when you can find Northern men to do your dirty work for you."

The other kind of men who betrayed their constituency were soon forgotten, though the memory of their deed lived long after them. This narrative is concerned only with the chief figures in the mercenary job that carried the Douglas bill through to success. President Pierce employed the vast patronage at his disposal to force the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The following extract from an editorial that appeared in the "New York Evening Post," at this period, gives a good idea of the situation as it was revealed to the anti-slavery press by their friends in Congress: "All the methods of influence and intimidation which organization, numbers, and patronage can supply are used without stint at the seat of government to silence those who disapprove of the bill, and engage the wavering to give it support. Those

who have visited Washington speak of a leaden tyranny which is felt everywhere, weighing upon men's minds, coercing them into a sad, helpless acquiescence in the measure." But this told only a fractional part of the story.

When the Douglas bill was fairly under discussion, the "Little Giant" one day, in a burst of confidence, told Mr. Hamlin what he had suspected, — that the bill was an administration measure. Mr. Douglas said at the same time that he purposed to get something in black and white from President Pierce to hold him fast to the bill. A day or two afterwards, Mr. Douglas showed Senator Hamlin the original draft of the final amendment to the Kansas-Nebraska bill. This contained the clause repealing the Missouri Compromise, and was written by Franklin Pierce himself.<sup>1</sup> Jefferson Davis, in his account<sup>2</sup> of the interview between Mr. Douglas, President Pierce, and others regarding the fateful amendment, denied that the measure originated with the President or any member of the Cabinet. It would also appear from Senator Dixon's story that he took Douglas by surprise when he proposed to repeal the compromise of 1820. No doubt Mr. Davis and Mr. Dixon were correct. Senator Douglas was quick to catch the drift of things political. Probably he got an idea from Mr. Dixon's proposition as to what was the intention among the Southern senators, and acted on it. Then Mr. Pierce entered the race with Mr. Douglas.

The responsibility for inventing the scheme of abrogating the Missouri act need not be detailed; the story deals with the results. It cannot be proved that there was a secret understanding established between General Pierce and the Southern leaders prior to his nomination for the presidency; and it is not contended that there was an agreement, whereby Mr. Pierce pledged himself in terms to favor the annulment of the compromise of 1820; on the other hand, it is asserted that the leaders of the slave oligarchy, in their search for a Northern man with Southern principles, were satisfied by pledges of a convincing nature that Franklin Pierce was the one they wanted and would do what they desired. Three times he broke his solemn vow to the country to maintain the compromise measures of 1850. A man who would do that would hardly hesitate to make secret ante-convention promises to gain the great office of the presidency. The promptness with which Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens, Thomas L. Clingman, Judah P. Benjamin, and other leading Whigs deserted their party to support Pierce for President; the conferences at Concord between General Pierce and Southern leaders before his nomination, and his subsequent conduct as President, admit of no other conclusion

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lincoln*, by Nicolay and Hay, vol. i. p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Rise and Fall of the Confederacy*, vol. i. p. 28.



than that Mr. Pierce bound himself to advance the interests of the slaveholding South. This was Senator Hamlin's belief.

A few days before the Senate came to a vote on the Douglas bill, Mr. Hamlin received direct proof that the administration was resorting to venality to accomplish its object. This was one of the two occasions during the quarter of a century Mr. Hamlin sat in the Senate when he was approached by corrupt men. The first who approached him was Caleb Cushing, attorney-general of the United States. He was a singular character. A man of great ability, yet without sincerity, though his adroitness blinded many as to the real man. He threaded his way from one party to another on thin pretenses that entitled him to be called the political Blondin of his day. He had but one rival as a political prestidigitateur, and that was his associate, Benjamin F. Butler, of Massachusetts. The two were once aptly characterized as "the Siamese Twins in chicanery and intrigue." Butler was the more mischievous of the two. His sophisms were not wholly confined to politics, but filled the court-room, and influenced young men in forming their ideas of the standards and actions of life. These two men were active in arranging the terms of Pierce's nomination, — whatever they were, — and now Cushing came to Senator Hamlin to complete his record of jobbery.

The interview took place in Mr. Hamlin's rooms at the St. Charles Hotel. Cushing in his adroit way presented the Kansas-Nebraska bill to Mr. Hamlin as an administrative measure, and urged him to support it as a party bill. Gradually he unfolded the obstacles that had already been overcome, and then when he came to those that remained, Cushing, in direct terms on behalf of the administration, offered Mr. Hamlin control of all the patronage in New England, or Maine, that he might ask for. This was to be his reward for voting in favor of the Douglas bill. Senator Hamlin cut the interview short by rising to his feet and saying, with considerable grimness of manner: "Cushing, I am forty-four years old. I have never done anything for which I am ashamed, and with God's help I don't propose to either." Mr. Cushing and his oily manner evaporated at once.

But this was not all. The next day President Pierce resolved to sound Mr. Hamlin, and accordingly sent for him. Mr. Hamlin called at the White House, and was received in the President's private room. Mr. Pierce almost immediately came to the point. He asked Mr. Hamlin what the Senate was going to do about the Douglas bill. Mr. Hamlin was at once on his guard, and replied that there was apparently not a majority in favor of it.

"Well," continued the President, "suppose, now, that it should become a party measure, what would you do in regard to it?"

"As to that," said Hamlin quietly, "it is only necessary for

me to say at this time that I do not regard the measure as a wise one."

"Still," urged the President, "you could not stand up against your party; even Calhoun and White, of Tennessee, failed to do that."

"And yet," said the Maine senator, "I shall, if necessary, take the responsibility of standing up against my party. I have my constituents to serve, and they shall be served to the best of my ability, irrespective of any party. At the same time, let us understand each other. Did you ask me to come here expecting to get me to aid you in repealing the compromise?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Pierce, after a moment's consideration, "I did."

"Then, sir, I must say to you," replied Mr. Hamlin earnestly, "that during the more than forty years I have lived, I have doubtless made many mistakes, but I have never lost self-respect. I would do so should I vote for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. It is needless to say more, and I shall bid you good-morning."<sup>1</sup>

This was the last time Mr. Hamlin spoke with Franklin Pierce. When he withdrew from the White House on this occasion, he resolved never to return while Mr. Pierce was its occupant. It is also of interest to note that this was the last time Mr. Hamlin entered the White House as a member of the Democratic party. A few days later, March 4, at five o'clock in the morning, after an exhausting struggle, just a year after Mr. Pierce had been installed in the presidency, the Senate voted to repeal the Missouri Compromise. The iron pressure of the administration proved too much for certain senators, and the hopes Mr. Hamlin and others had were disappointed. With the two honorable exceptions of John Bell, of Tennessee, and Sam Houston, of Texas, the Southern senators were a unit, and, with their Northern allies, threw thirty-seven votes for the destruction of the nation's solemn pledges of 1820. Houston's protest was moving and eloquent, and the more patriotic since he knew that it would ruin whatever chances he had for the presidency. Bell's course was equally honorable, and his fame would have been enviable in all respects had he remained as consistent to the end as Houston did.

Fourteen Northern senators voted for the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise, and several more were not in their seats when the final roll was called. The fourteen were General Lewis Cass and Charles E. Stuart of Michigan; Moses Norris and Jared W. Williams, of New Hampshire; Augustus C. Dodge and George W. Jones, of Iowa; Stephen A. Douglas and James Shields, of Illinois; William M. Gwin and John R. Weller, of California; Richard Brodhead, of Pennsylvania; John Pettit, of Indiana; John R. Thompson, of New

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*, p. 137.

Jersey, and Isaac Toucey, of Connecticut. Jesse D. Bright, of Indiana, and Robert Toombs, of Georgia, were both absent when the vote was taken, but sent word that they favored the passage of the Douglas bill. Philip Allen, of Rhode Island, was called away from Washington on account of sickness in his family, but authorized his colleague to announce that he was opposed to the Douglas bill. Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, did not vote, on account of illness. He was opposed to the repeal. Pairs were not announced in the "Congressional Globe" at that time.

In the following May, the House passed a bill to repeal the Missouri Compromise by a vote of 113 to 100. There were forty-four Northern men among the majority, and they were distributed among a dozen different States, as the list will show. They were : Moses MacDonald, of Maine ; Harry Hibbard, of New Hampshire ; Collin M. Ingersoll, of Connecticut ; Thomas W. Cumming, Francis B. Cutting, Peter Rowe, John J. Taylor, William M. Tweed, Hiram Walbridge, William A. Walker, Mike Walsh, Theodoric R. Westbrook, of New York ; Samuel Lilly and George Vail, of New Jersey ; Samuel A. Bridges, John L. Dawson, Thomas B. Florence, J. Glancey Jones, William H. Kurtz, John McNair, Asa Packer, John W. Robbins, Christian M. Straub, William W. Witte, and Hendrick B. Wright, of Pennsylvania ; David T. Disney, Frederick W. Green, Edson B. Olds, Wilson Shannon, of Ohio ; Samuel Clark and David Stuart, of Michigan ; James C. Allen, Willis Allen, and William A. Richardson, of Illinois ; Bernhart Henn, of Iowa ; John G. Davis, Norman Eddy, William H. English,<sup>1</sup> Thomas A. Hendricks,<sup>2</sup> James H. Lane, Cyrus L. Dunham, and Smith Miller, of Indiana ; Milton S. Latham and James A. McDougall, of California.

There were nine Southern men in the House who resisted the cry of their section of the country for the wiping out of the Missouri Compromise. They were Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri ; Robert M. Bugg, William Cullom, Emerson Etheridge, and Nathaniel G. Taylor, of Tennessee ; Theodore G. Hunt, of Louisiana ; John S. Millson, of Virginia ; Richard C. Puryear and Sion H. Rogers, of North Carolina. The rest of the one hundred were : Israel Washburn, Samuel P. Benson, Samuel Mayall, E. Wilder Farley, and T. J. D. Fuller, of Maine ; Nathaniel P. Banks, Samuel L. Crocker, Alexander DeWitt, Edward Dickinson, J. Wiley Edmands, Thomas D. Eliot, John Z. Goodrich, Charles W. Upham, Samuel H. Walley, and Tappan Wentworth, of Massachusetts ; George W. Kittredge, George W. Morrison, of New Hampshire ; James Meacham, Alvah Sabin, and Andrew Tracy, of Vermont ; Thomas Davis and Benjamin B.

<sup>1</sup> Democratic candidate for Vice-President in 1880.

<sup>2</sup> Elected Vice-President on the Democratic ticket in 1884.



Thurston, of Rhode Island ; Nathan Belcher, James T. Pratt, and Origen S. Seymour, of Connecticut ; Henry Bennett, Davis Carpenter, Gilbert Dean, Reuben E. Fenton, Thomas T. Flagler, George Hastings, Solomon G. Haven, Charles Hughes, Daniel T. Jones, Caleb Lyon, Orasamus B. Matteson, Edwin B. Morgan, William Murray, Andrew Oliver, Jared V. Peck, Rufus W. Peckham, Bishop Perkins, Benjamin Pringle, Russell Sage, George A. Simmons, Gerrit Smith, and John Wheeler, of New York ; Alexander C. M. Pennington, Charles Skelton, and Nathan T. Stratton, of New Jersey ; Joseph R. Chandler, Carlton B. Curtis, John Dick, Augustus Drum, William Everhart, James Gamble, Galusha A. Grow, Isaac E. Hiester, Thomas H. Home, John McCulloch, Ner Middleswarth, David Ritchie, Samuel Russell, and Michael C. Trout, of Pennsylvania ; Edward Ball, Lewis D. Campbell, Alfred P. Edgerton, Andrew Ellison, Joshua R. Giddings, Aaron Harlan, Andrew J. Harlan, Scott Harrison, Harvey H. Johnson, William D. Lindsley, Matthias H. Nichols, Thomas Ritchey, William R. Sapp, Andrew Stuart, John L. Taylor, and Edward Wade, of Ohio ; David A. Noble and Hestor L. Stevens, of Michigan ; James Knox, Jesse O. Norton, Elihu B. Washburne, John Wentworth, and Richard Yates, of Illinois ; Andrew J. Harlan, Daniel Mace, and Samuel W. Parker, of Indiana ; Benjamin C. Eastman and Daniel Wells, of Wisconsin.

It is not easy to separate the sheep from the goats in this instance. It is probable that partisanship and patronage were equally responsible for the disastrous step Congress took. Macdonald, of Maine, one of the three representatives who falsified the sentiment of New England, was instructed by an almost unanimous vote of the legislature of Maine to oppose the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. In an extreme speech in the House, Macdonald denied the right of the legislature to instruct him, and claimed that that body did not correctly represent the sentiment of the State. He had long been one of Mr. Hamlin's most active opponents. He was now retired from Congress for misrepresenting the people of his district.

It was not clear what the slavery propagandists would do after they had succeeded in tearing down the bulwark of 1820. Their plan to colonize Kansas and Nebraska with slaveholders was carefully concealed at first. It was apparent, of course, that their onslaught on the Missouri Compromise meant "infinite mischief." There was nothing to do but wait and see what the conspirators would do next. Shortly after the Missouri Compromise was repealed, and before the Calhoun party had given a hint of the programme its leaders were plotting, Senator Hamlin stated his position to Douglas, Hunter, and other pro-slavery leaders of his party with whom he had sustained personal and party relations. He said to them : —

“If the Democratic party indorses the doctrine of non-intervention in its next presidential convention I will leave it.”

With this Mr. Hamlin rested his case, awaiting official action of the party two years later. He voted with the Democratic senators on questions affecting the true principles of Democracy, but always opposed them on the slavery issue, and also squarely antagonized President Pierce on any measure that he favored in the interests of the slave power. Mr. Hamlin, therefore, virtually held the position of a Republican during the rest of the Pierce administration; but he was not the man to give up the ship while there was hope of keeping her afloat, and he did not officially sever his relations with the Democratic party until by its own act it was about to sink itself in the maelstrom in which the unhappy Pierce administration was wrecked.

One more incident of a personal nature, that reflects the rotten and reckless character of this unhappy political period, remains to be recorded. When the representatives of Texas were trying to induce the government to assume the heavy debt of their State, there was more than one member of Congress who profited financially through unscrupulous lobbyists who offered them Texas bonds at a low figure. One prominent Democrat, who was identified with the scheme to bribe Kansas to adopt a pro-slavery constitution by offering her land, and who was afterwards an unsuccessful candidate for Vice-President, laid the basis for his private fortune by buying up Texas scrip at this time. A certain senator, whose name Mr. Hamlin would not divulge out of consideration for his family, approached him at this time, and made him the only corrupt offer of money that was ever made to him in all his career. Mr. Hamlin had only a speaking acquaintance with this senator, and he was angered when the latter said to him in a mysterious way, “Senator, I know where Texas bonds can be obtained for fifty cents on the dollar.”

“Indeed,” replied Mr. Hamlin with a sharp look that was intended to preclude any suggestion of a dishonorable nature.

The senator, not understanding, proceeded eagerly, “Yes; I know where they can be bought for twenty-five cents on the dollar. What do you say?”

“I have this to say,” replied Senator Hamlin, turning on the lobbyist, “I am forty-four years old to-day. I may have made mistakes, but I have never done anything of which I am ashamed, and with God’s help I never will. Damn you and damn your bonds!”

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MR. HAMLIN LEAVES THE DEMOCRACY

THE Republican party was born out of conditions that were created chiefly during the decade of slavery propagandism, which began with the annexation of Texas and closed with the tearing down of the barrier of 1820. With the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the North found itself menaced by an aggressive sectional party, which now proposed to plant an institution among the Northern people that they loathed, and which their forefathers had expelled from their soil. There was a general feeling throughout the North that a new party should be formed to prevent the people thereof from being despoiled of their natural and constitutional rights. A series of conventions were held in Maine, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, in the summer of 1854, and action was formally taken in the name of the Republican party. Yet this illustrious organization did not fairly spring into existence until two years later. Following the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise, the vast majority of anti-slavery men waited and watched for the next move of the enemy. This placed the responsibility for the crisis of 1860 on the slave power. When it endeavored to force slavery into Kansas, the anti-slavery elements coalesced, and the Republican party stood forth for its first great battle, — the presidential campaign of 1856.

The common interests and sympathies of the anti-slavery people contributed to draw men of the old parties together in practical relations before great events cemented the opponents of slavery into a compact political party. An interesting and picturesque phase of life at Washington, at this period, may be presented in evidence of this. For more than ten years, the centre of the anti-slavery congressmen and other well known opponents of the peculiar institution was the home of Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, the editor of the "National Era." Dr. Bailey was a man of large culture, sound political judgment, and indomitable courage. He was also a delightful host, and his companionship was sought and enjoyed by statesmen, journalists, writers, scientists, and other people of distinction. His home would have been noted as a brilliant, intellectual centre, even if this phase of the life



there had not been overtopped by the distinct anti-slavery character of the gatherings at his house. It was aptly characterized as "an American salon," by Grace Greenwood,<sup>1</sup> in an interesting reminiscence of the people and scenes she saw at Dr. Bailey's.

Dr. Bailey began publishing the "National Era" in 1847, the year Mr. Hamlin closed his second term in the House, and their acquaintance probably began shortly after Mr. Hamlin entered the Senate. When the compromise measures were before Congress, Mr. Hamlin was one of the regular frequenters of Dr. Bailey's house. He was not as radical as the more outspoken people who gathered there; he was more cautious and alive to the practical difficulties that beset the opponents of slavery. But he was in sympathy with the animating spirit of the Bailey gatherings that drew anti-slavery people together and enabled them to take counsel against the enemy. The Saturday night receptions at the Baileys were brilliant affairs. Among the prominent men who figured at these gatherings were Seward, Sumner, Hale, Chase, Corwin, Giddings, Wilmot, Preston King, Robert Rantoul, Henry Wilson, George W. Julian, Justice McLean, John G. Palfrey, Horace Mann, Moncure D. Conway, and many others whom Mr. Hamlin well knew and esteemed. In her sketch of these scenes, Grace Greenwood describes Mr. Hamlin as a "strong, active man, with a constitutional objection to overcoats and other compromise measures, fond of walking, and not averse to dancing."

Another interesting chronicler of these times was George W. Julian, whose name was associated with that of John P. Hale, on the Free-Soil presidential ticket of 1852. At this time he was coming into national prominence as one of the bravest and promptest anti-slavery men in Congress. In his "Political Recollections,"<sup>2</sup> Mr. Julian records: "It was not strange, therefore, that the little band of Free-Soilers in this Congress (the thirty-eighth) encountered popular obloquy and social outlawry at the capital. Their position was offensive, because it rebuked the ruling influences of the times, and summoned the real manhood of the country to its rescue. They were treated as pestilent fanatics because they bravely held up the idea of the republic, and sought to make it real. But they pressed forward along the path of their aspirations. They found a solace for their social ostracism in the delightful gatherings which assembled weekly at the residence of Dr. Bailey, where they met philanthropists, reformers, and literary notables. They had the courage of their opinions, and genuine satisfaction which accompanies manliness of character; and they lived to see their principles vindicated."

In a private letter,<sup>3</sup> Mr. Julian added: "I knew Mr. Hamlin well

<sup>1</sup> *The Cosmopolitan*, February, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Page 112.

<sup>3</sup> January 27, 1897, to the author.

during the latter part of his life, and always admired him. I knew him also in his prime, having first met him in the Congress of 1849-50. He was then a commanding figure in the Senate, — perfectly erect, of quick step, bright, sparkling eyes, with a look of vigor and alertness about him. He was a Democrat, but not of the pro-slavery type, and he used to join the Free-Soilers of the Senate and House in social gatherings at Dr. Bailey's house. His geniality was charming, and I recall him vividly and most pleasantly as he appeared to me more than forty-seven years ago."

The importance Mr. Hamlin attached to the gatherings at Dr. Bailey's house may be learned from the following letter Grace Greenwood incorporated in her reminiscences of "An American Salon," —

"Our first Republican Vice-President, whose name is linked for all time with that of Abraham Lincoln, writes to me from his home in Bangor : —

"I have neither forgotten you nor the cosy, pleasant meetings at Dr. Bailey's to which you refer. Those meetings were of very great value to the anti-slavery cause. They were made up of persons who believed in the anti-slavery principles which they professed and advocated. I can think of no instrumentality which did so good a service to our cause. The meetings were composed in great part of men and women of both Whig and Democratic affiliations, but who were at heart anti-slavery ; and they served to unite and strengthen all who participated in them, and to extend their sphere of useful activity. They cheered the resolute and determined in opinion the timid.

"Alas ! how few are now left who know the ordeal which we all entertaining anti-slavery sentiments had to pass through ! I then believed that God in his goodness would wipe out the "sum of all villainies," but I never dreamed that it would come, as it has come, in my day.

Yours truly,

"H. HAMLIN."

There is, unfortunately, no further record of Senator Hamlin's connection with this interesting episode in the consolidation of the anti-slavery people. His constant presence at the receptions and conferences at Dr. Bailey's home is evidence that he was active in shaping and advising the opposition to the slave power. But he said little to his friends of the part he played ; that was his nature. Mr. Hamlin's energies in fighting the slave oligarchy were probably employed to a larger extent at these informal gatherings than anywhere else at this time. After his rupture with President Pierce and the leaders of the Democracy, Mr. Hamlin was placed in a peculiar position. In serving notice on Douglas, Hunter, and other leaders of his party that he would leave them should they enforce the doctrine of non-

intervention, Senator Hamlin's duty was to maintain a waiting attitude and see what his party would do. He bided his time well, and his silence in the Senate during the last two years of the Pierce administration emphasized his short but memorable repudiation of the Democracy when it indorsed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and nominated James Buchanan for President. His position was, therefore, logical and justified.

At the same time Mr. Hamlin was exceedingly busy with his laborious duties in the Senate. A careful examination of the "Congressional Globe" shows that his work covered a wide scope. The nature may be indicated; lack of space prohibits further mention. Among the subjects which Mr. Hamlin briefly discussed and in which he took an interest were the transportation of the United States mails in ocean steamers, features of the tariff, the construction of revenue cutters, river and harbor improvements, civil and diplomatic bills, the coast survey department, the establishment of collection districts, pension and appropriation bills, the French spoliation fund,<sup>1</sup> measures to extend the land bounty system, the regulation of fees, and also other topics that composed the business before the Senate. He also made some remarks on more important affairs, — the Kansas-Topeka Convention, the suppression of the African slave trade, and the establishment of a telegraphic line to the Pacific coast. But the record has been sufficiently extended to show how absorbing Mr. Hamlin's duties were. There is not space to relate the details of any one of the measures mentioned in which he was interested, or to touch on private bills, claims, and many other things of lesser importance.<sup>2</sup> It may be said that Mr. Hamlin was regarded by many of his colleagues and heads of departments under the government as the business man of the Senate. This will be referred to later; the more picturesque incidents now claim attention.

In the Senate there were echoes of the disturbance made by the Fugitive Slave Law during the latter part of the Pierce administration. Charles Sumner was now making himself felt. Several times

<sup>1</sup> Senator Hamlin gave much time and labor to obtain the passage of a bill refunding \$5,000,000 to those whose property the French government had despoiled. President Pierce vetoed the bill. See chapter on Legislature.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hamlin was active in supporting the movement originated by Dorothea Lynde Dix to have the government appropriate 10,000,000 acres of land to provide for the indigent insane. President Pierce vetoed the bill. Miss Dix wrote Mr. Hamlin: "I cannot allow the period touching the passage of the land bill for the relief of the insane, by the Senate, to pass without adverting to my sense of the energy and ability with which you last year conducted this measure, and though not successful, all know that delay was the result of circumstances beyond your control. I shall, sir, always associate your name with the final success of this bill, and beg to be allowed to express my high appreciation of your worth as a statesman and my respect for you in your station as a citizen."



he introduced bills, or tried to initiate measures, to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. In a preceding chapter reference was made to the first two attempts by Sumner. Mr. Hamlin supported him on each occasion. At another time, August 26, 1852, Mr. Hamlin voted against a proposition of Mr. Sumner's to amend a bill to abrogate the obnoxious statute. The incident should be alluded to because it has been made to serve the purposes of one of Mr. Hamlin's critics to misrepresent him. An illustration of this is found in Edward L. Pierce's "Life and Memoirs of Charles Sumner," vol. iii. p. 304. Mr. Pierce found fault because only three senators — Hale, Chase, and Wade — supported Sumner, and he censured those who opposed Sumner by placing their names in the "column of compromisers and disunionists," and saying that it "is difficult at this distance of time to comprehend the degradation of American politics." Mr. Hamlin, Hamilton Fish, John H. Clarke, of Rhode Island, Truman Smith, of Connecticut, and William Upham were among those who voted No. Their anti-slavery course needs no defense here. Mr. Hamlin was an anti-slavery leader in the House before Mr. Sumner was known outside of Massachusetts. He did not find it necessary to shape his course according to the desires of Mr. Sumner. On this occasion only three of the anti-slavery senators thought that it was the right day to bring up the question of the repeal of Fugitive Slave Law. Mr. Sumner's biographer adds that Seward and John Davis "dodged" the vote. But this is the way a certain type of Sumner's admirers had of judging public men; that is, they measured them by their attitude towards Mr. Sumner.

This incident, which happened in 1852, would be an anachronism in this chapter were it not presented to introduce another from the same biographer, which is of a more serious character. This time Mr. Hamlin was singled out, and the circumstances of the instance render the animus in both cases clear. On July 31, 1854, Mr. Sumner once again brought up his bill to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. In his account of the vote, in his *Life of Sumner*, vol. iii. p. 393, Pierce observes: "Fessenden gave his vote for the repeal, while Hamlin remained discreetly silent."<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this was to persuade the reader that Mr. Hamlin "dodged" the issue, and was in the Senate at the time. Now there was no excuse for this misstatement. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there was a deliberate suppression of facts. To write of this episode the author of this charge against Mr. Hamlin necessarily had to refer to the

<sup>1</sup> The same biographer also misrepresented Mr. Hamlin's course on the annexation of Texas. On p. 99, vol. iii., he made it appear to the casual reader that Mr. Hamlin voted for the annexation of Texas as a slave State at the behest of the slave party.

printed pages of the "Congressional Globe." Mr. Sumner<sup>1</sup> himself announced that Mr. Hamlin was absent, and had asked him to take charge of a bill for him, which he had consented to do. Mr. Sumner introduced the bill, and then took up his own measure. In the "Bangor Jeffersonian," of August 1, 1854, the explicit reason for Mr. Hamlin's absence from the Senate is found in the announcement that he had been summoned to his home in Hampden by serious illness in his family.

There was anxiety about Mrs. Hamlin. She had fallen into a decline in health, and Mr. Hamlin had been summoned home because she had developed symptoms of a serious pulmonary trouble. In a short time the fatal disease that had seized her made such rapid progress that it was evident there was no hope of recovery. For a year Mrs. Hamlin lingered between life and death. It was a terrible ordeal for Mr. Hamlin, who was torn with grief over the condition of his beloved wife and anxiety over the political situation at Washington. It had been a perfect union. Mrs. Hamlin had been a devoted wife and mother, and there had been five children, but only three, Charles, Cyrus, and Sarah, then survived. The only sorrow Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin had known was the death of two sons in their infancy. One was their firstborn, who lost his life through a distressing accident. The friends of the family thought that this son was his father over again as a boy. He strongly resembled him in looks, spirit, and nature, and to the end of his life Mr. Hamlin could not reconcile himself to the loss of this promising boy. Mr. Hamlin devoted almost unceasing care to his wife during her last days, snatching a few days now and then to go to Washington during the session of Congress, when he thought he could leave his wife with safety.

Mr. Hamlin's letters during this trying ordeal are touching and sacred. An allusion, however, may be made to one which was written to A. M. Robinson, November 24, 1854. In this Mr. Hamlin wrote that he was with his wife all the time, and knew that his constituents would sympathize with him and find no fault with his absence from Washington. He added that he should go to the capital when Congress organized in December, but should return to his wife. "That is my duty, and I shall do it," he said in closing.

Mr. Hamlin's feelings of delicacy concerning his duties to his constituents may be gathered from the following letter Preston King wrote him on January 6, 1855. It is evident that Mr. Hamlin contemplated resigning his seat in the Senate. Mr. King wrote:—

"Yours of the first instant is received, and I most sincerely sympathize with you in the affliction that detains you at home. Be pleased to give my very kindest remembrances to Mrs. Hamlin.

<sup>1</sup> See *Congressional Globe*, No. 34, Part iii., p. 2015, 1st Session, 31st Congress.

"You must not, under any circumstances whatever, resign your seat in the Senate. Your first duty, it is true, except in some extraordinary emergency not likely to arise, is to remain where you are, — with your wife. Your second duty is to your country, and, if need be, the last duty would be first. Hold the position to be most serviceable to your principles which the people of Maine have called you to and imposed upon you, and you will not regard it officious in me to say what I think, — for what else should a man say?"

"I had a letter from Wilmot the other day, the first in a long time. He mourns the loss of Benton, in the speech read for him by his colleague Oliver. Your letter expresses the apprehension which the condition of parties and the intrigues of slavery propagandism compel us all to feel. But the sheet anchor is confidence in the good sense and patriotism of the people. This cannot fail — for with it the republic must stand or fall.

"Seward will be reëlected in this State. . . . There is a good degree of darkness about these days, but great confusion and convulsion of parties must precede and attend the downfall of slavery propagandism."

Many other letters from Mr. Hamlin's constituents to the same effect could be quoted. This was a great comfort to him in his hour of trial. He retained his seat in the Senate, and devoted himself to his wife until she passed away, in April, 1855.

The time of Mr. Hamlin's deliverance from the sin-laden Democracy was rapidly drawing near. He still stood pledged to his word to Douglas and Hunter that he would leave the party should it attempt to enforce the doctrine of popular sovereignty after repealing the Missouri Compromise. There are none so blind as those who will not see. The wrath that the abrogation of the barrier of 1820 produced among the Northern people was a warning that they would drop the usual political issues and resist the intrusion of slavery on their soil. But deceived by their victory, and the false representations of the so-called "dough-face" element, the leaders of the new South prepared to take advantage of their opportunity to make Kansas a slave State. No doubt they were spurred on by the condemnation the North had visited on the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, by wrenching the House from the control of the slave party in the election of 1854. The crowning triumph of the anti-slavery forces was the subsequent election of Nathaniel P. Banks, of Massachusetts, speaker of the House over William Aiken, of South Carolina, in February, 1855, after an unparalleled contest of two months. But the last dregs of bitterness for Mr. Pierce in this hour of humiliation was his complete repudiation in his own State. The faithless senators and representatives of the Granite State were all retired, and John P. Hale and James Bell elected to the Senate, with a solid body of anti-slavery men in the House.



President Pierce entered with zeal on the last stage of his desperate struggle for another term. It was claimed that he pursued a course towards Cuba and Great Britain in order to divert national attention from the outrages the slave party was committing in Kansas, and there were even loud insinuations that the administration would not be averse to a war with Spain. The United States had long had complicated relations with that country over Cuba, and the slave power desired to acquire the island now to extend its institution. Mr. Pierce directed Mr. Buchanan, John Y. Mason, and Pierre Soule, the United States ministers to England, France, and Spain, to meet at Ostend and take action with regard to Cuba. They issued the so-called manifesto, which was a bold declaration that if Spain would not sell Cuba to the United States that nation would be warranted in seizing the island to prevent it from being Africanized into a second San Domingo. This created a great sensation, but European powers quickly intervened, and there was an end to his scheme. Mr. Hamlin wrote A. M. Robinson on June 10, 1854:—

“I did fear that we would have a ‘row’ with Spain, growing out of Cuban matters, but I think it will blow over now. It looks that way.”

The fertile Caleb Cushing employed his talents in seeking to stir up a blustering controversy with Great Britain over the efforts of certain officials of that nation to enlist men in this country for the Crimean war. Mr. Cushing pointed out, in an elaborate opinion to the English Foreign Office, that this was a violation of the neutrality treaty. During the civil war the English Foreign Office charged the United States government with enlisting men in Ireland, and at the same time politely returned Mr. Cushing’s note to Secretary Seward. President Pierce demanded the recall of Mr. Crampton, the British minister at Washington. When it was refused, Mr. Pierce dismissed Mr. Crampton and the British consuls at New York, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati. Great Britain, having one war on hand, promptly acquiesced, and in the official correspondence admitted that Mr. Crampton’s conduct was “notoriously at war with the rights of neutrality and national honor.” Yet at the same time the English government transformed the man it thus castigated into Sir John Crampton, and promoted him to the Russian embassy, all of which showed that the British lion could box with one paw and pat with another, if need be, to disarm a warlike administration.

Thus it was not permitted the pro-slavery party to raise a smoke of foreign complications in order that it might slink behind it, and accomplish its purpose in Kansas. The plot against Kansas soon stood out clear and bold. Mr. Pierce called a special election for the people of Kansas to choose a delegate to Congress. The struggle that followed

is almost without parallel in the history of established government. Ruffians from Missouri swarmed into Kansas, armed with rifles and pistols. Riot and murder reigned. The pro-slavery mobs captured the ballot-boxes, and at the special election stuffed more ballots into the boxes than there were legal residents in the territory. President Pierce set the great machine at his command in motion to aid the cut-throats who were trampling on the rights of freeborn men and women. Andrew H. Reeder, of Pennsylvania, whom he had appointed governor of the territory, refused to do his bidding. Mr. Reeder's removal from office by the President was a testimonial to his patriotism and integrity. But the men who fought for Kansas's freedom were not the kind of stuff to bow to this slave administration. They came from New England and other free States. They held an election, and chose Reeder as their delegate. Thus Congress was called on to act, and was embroiled in the hottest and fiercest fight that the slavery question had yet provoked.

Mr. Hamlin resumed his seat in the Senate when the controversy over Kansas was coming to a white heat. The slave party had never been as bold and desperate as now. Though the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" had proved to be a vulgar swindle, and though it was a notorious fact that border ruffians from Missouri had brought civil war into Kansas, and were trampling on the rights of the legal residents of the territory, nevertheless this President and his supporters in Congress put on a brazen face and continued to abet the malefactors. Mr. Pierce made one of his last bids for a renomination when he declared in a message to Congress that the responsibilities for the troubles in Kansas rested on the shoulders of the anti-slavery settlers. But although Mr. Pierce had broken his sacred pledges, and dragged himself through the mud of politics at the behest of his masters, they denied him his coveted honor. Men who depend on a tool do not keep faith with him after he has served their purpose. Mr. Hamlin watched the Pierce farce. One of his comments is interesting. To A. M. Robinson he wrote on January 10, 1856:—

"Pierce stands no chance for a renomination at all. He has been used, and is now to be thrown away, as we do a lemon after we have squeezed it. . . . He has not many more friends in the South than in the North."

The next development in the conspiracy against Kansas was the establishment of a fraudulent legislature by the Missouri Border Ruffians. They were incited by David R. Atchison, senator from their own State and once acting vice-president. They seized the ballot-boxes, intimidated legal voters, and cast twice as many votes as there were voters in the territory according to the census. The Free-Soil citizens established a government, held a constitutional convention,

and sent a memorial to Congress petitioning for the right to organize Kansas into a State. The leaders of the slave party in the Senate were in such an intolerant frame of mind that they even proposed to refuse the petitioners the courtesy of printing this memorial. While this was being discussed on April 10, 1856, Mr. Hamlin made some brief, but vigorous remarks. A Washington correspondent of the "Bangor Jeffersonian" describes the incident as follows:—

"The debate was more acrimonious than at any time during the session. The Border Ruffians were chafed and soured by the lecture they had received from Governor Seward, and were altogether in a highly inflammable state. In this condition of things Mr. Hamlin applied a spark to the powder by quietly remarking that the proposition to refuse to print the memorial of the free state legislature of Kansas could have its parallel only in the treatment of the petitions and remonstrances of the American colonies by the British Parliament under the administration of Lord North. Either what was said or the quarter from which it was said, or both combined, stirred the passions of the Southern senators to the bottom. Judge Butler was especially rampant. Mr. Hamlin was as cool and as unruffled as a summer morning, and I suspect enjoyed the scene. Others did if he did not."

The temper of the slave party was now intolerant. Ruffians swarmed at the capital; personal encounters were not infrequent; Washington seemed to have caught the atmosphere of far-away Kansas. This was the state of things that produced the crowning act of brutality,—the murderous assault Preston Brooks, a representative from South Carolina, made on Charles Sumner. The fury this dastardly outrage aroused at the North stimulated the popularity of the anti-slavery cause. Sumner was struck down because he had told the truth about the "crime against Kansas." The unfortunate man who committed this act was the tool of more malignant men than he. To the maddened anti-slavery people Brooks's bludgeon was the incarnation of the old gag-law. Mr. Hamlin was one of the Republican senators who met at Senator Seward's house and discussed the proper course to pursue. Several of the senators armed themselves; many Republican senators carried revolvers. On May 28, 1856, six days after the attack on Sumner, Mr. Hamlin wrote Senator Fessenden, who had been called to Maine:—

"We are having rare times here, such as I have never seen. It is my candid opinion that some will be shot down before the session closes. All I have to say is, *let it come*. If we do not stand manfully and fearlessly to the work before us, *we ought to be slaves*."

This letter throws a little light on the plans of the Republican senators. They unquestionably expected another outbreak, and were prepared for it. The impassioned utterances of Ben Wade, in de-



nouncing the assault on Sumner, were undoubtedly known beforehand to his Republican colleagues. "Live or die," said he, "I will vindicate the right and liberty of debate and freedom of discussion upon this floor as long as I live." This was understood, moreover, to be a reply to "Bob" Toombs, who had declared that he had witnessed the attack on Sumner and approved it. But Toombs did not challenge Wade, who was known to be a crack rifle shot. Brooks sent a challenge to Henry Wilson, who declined to accept on the grounds that he was opposed to the code. Anson Burlingame professed his willingness to fight Brooks in Canada, but the latter withdrew his challenge on the allegation that it would not be safe for him to pass through the North. Mr. Burlingame was another good shot. Brooks soon afterwards died of remorse, and there were no duels.

The Democratic party held its presidential convention at Cincinnati on June 2, 1856. It formally indorsed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, upheld the doctrine that Congress had no right to interfere with slavery in the territories, rejected Pierce and Douglas, and nominated James Buchanan and John C. Breckinridge as its candidates. Thus the Democracy by its own act acknowledged itself to be the aggressive pro-slavery party. Thus it accepted the doctrine of John C. Calhoun, that the national flag carried slavery wherever it floated. It was no longer the party of Jefferson and Jackson, which had dedicated itself to the noble work of preserving the liberty of the individual and sustaining the Constitution; it was a machine, whose purpose it was to trample on the rights of a people, and to force them to receive slavery into their lives; it would subvert the Constitution to do this, if necessary. The downfall of the once proud and noble party was as complete as the fall of a woman. The candidates it named possessed blameless private characters, but they were both heartily in accord with the doctrines of their party.

Senator Hamlin had, it is unnecessary to say, anticipated the action of the Cincinnati convention. Although he had not yet formally withdrawn from the Democracy, he had regularly acted with the Republican senators, and was classed with them. The first expressions of condemnation he uttered in regard to the proceedings of the Cincinnati convention are contained in the following letter of June 6, to his trusted friend, Leander Valentine, of Westbrook:—

"Your letter breathes the right tone, and I concur fully in all you say. We were most woefully cheated in our President. He has not only falsified all his promises, but he has brought the country to the verge of ruin. All good men must take hold and save it. Tyranny rules in our territories; ruffianism revels in Congress, riots in Washington. All is the result of the measures of this wicked administration. But these acts of crime will

revolutionize and save the country. If the North will not unite now to vindicate their rights and constitutional freedom, they will not only deserve to be slaves, but they will be. The small minority in the Senate will stand manfully by their rights and the rights of the free white men. You may rely on that. If they did not do that, they would be worse than slaves.

"You will see that the Cincinnati convention has indorsed all the iniquity of this administration. Now let the work begin. Kindle up the fires and roll on the ball. We will sweep the country, and save it from the storms that gather round it. I was quiet last year, but shall not be so this year. . . . I will do all I can to whirl this corrupt administration from power, and to prevent its perpetuation in any other person of the same stamp (as Pierce). The old Democratic party is now only the party of slavery. It has no other issue; that is the standard by which it measures everything and every man!!! Beautiful Democracy!!! I did not learn my principles, and shall not practice, in that school.

"Freedom is crushed out in Kansas. There is no remedy but in a change of administration, and that we must have."

Douglas, Hunter, and other pillars of the Democracy now watched Mr. Hamlin with great apprehension. They knew that he would redeem his word to them and formally withdraw from their party. There was active speculation among them as to the time and place Senator Hamlin would choose for severing his party ties. They could find out nothing from him. He was as courteous as ever, but silent as to his intentions. On June 12, or six days after the Cincinnati convention, Mr. Hamlin arose in the Senate, and immediately attracted its attention by saying:—

"Mr. President, I rise for a purpose purely personal, such as I have never before risen for in the Senate. I desire to explain some matters personal to myself and to my future course in public life."

When the pro-slavery leaders heard this, they knew that Mr. Hamlin had decided that the time had come for him to speak out. Douglas, Hunter, and even Sam Houston and other conservative Democrats immediately left their seats and crowded around Mr. Hamlin's desk to "implore him to put off his speech."

"Don't do it now," said Douglas; "wait until to-morrow."

"Yes, wait until to-morrow," urged Hunter.

Their object was to gain time, in the hope that they might persuade Mr. Hamlin to choose another place than the United States Senate for his act of repudiation. They feared the moral effect of his course, and were anxious to anticipate his withdrawal from their party in order to discount it as much as possible. But Mr. Hamlin was well aware of their object; he did not propose to lose the advantage of his silence, and he replied firmly but courteously, "No, my mind is made up; I shall speak it out now."

In the mean time Wade, Hale, and several other Republican senators, who had an idea of what was coming, called out, "Go on, go on!" Mr. Hamlin then spoke as follows, amidst breathless silence:—

"I ask the Senate to excuse me from further service as chairman of the Committee on Commerce. I do so, because I feel that my relations hereafter will be of such a character as to render it proper that I should no longer hold that position. I owe this act to the dominant majority in the Senate. When I cease to harmonize with the majority, or tests are applied by that party with which I have acted, to which I cannot submit, I feel that I ought no longer to hold that responsible position. I propose to state briefly the reasons which have brought me to that conclusion.

"During nine years of service in the Senate, I have preferred rather to be a working than a talking member, and so I have been almost a silent one. On the subjects which have so much agitated the country, senators know that I have rarely uttered a word. I love my country more than I love my party. I love my country above my love for any interest that can too deeply agitate or disturb its harmony. I saw, in all the exciting scenes and debates through which we have passed, no particular good that would result from my active intermingling in them. My heart has often been full, and the impulses of that heart have often been felt upon my lips, but I have repressed them there.

"Sir, I hold that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a gross moral and political wrong, unequaled in the annals of the legislation of this country, and hardly equaled in the annals of any other free country. Still, sir, with a desire to promote harmony and concord and brotherly feeling, I was a quiet man under all the exciting debates which led to that fatal result. I believed it wrong then; I can see that wrong lying broadcast all around us now. As a wrong I opposed that measure—not indeed by my voice, but with consistent and steady and uniform votes. I so resisted it in obedience to the dictates of my own judgment. I did it also cheerfully, in compliance with the instructions of the legislature of Maine, which were passed by a vote almost unanimous. In the House of Representatives of Maine, consisting of 151 members, only six, I think, dissented; and in the Senate, consisting of 31 members, only one member non-concurred.

"But the Missouri restriction was abrogated. The portentous evils that were predicted have followed, and are yet following, along in its train. It was done, sir, in violation of the pledges of that party with which I have always acted, and with which I have always voted. It was done in violation of solemn pledges of the President of the United States, made in his inaugural address. Still, sir, I was disposed to suffer the wrong, until I should see that no evil results were flowing from it. We were told by almost every senator who addressed us



upon that occasion that no evil results would follow ; that no practical difference in the settlement of the country, and the character of the future State, would take place, whether the act were done or not. I have waited calmly and patiently to see the fulfillment of that prediction ; and I am grieved, sir, to say now that they have at least been mistaken in their predictions and promises. They all have signally failed.

“That senators might have voted for that measure under the belief then expressed, and the predictions to which I have alluded, I can well understand ; but how senators can now defend that measure amid all its evils, which are overwhelming the land, if not threatening it with a conflagration, is what I do not comprehend. The whole of the disturbed state of the country has its rise in, and is attributable to, that act alone — nothing else. It lies at the foundation of all our misfortunes and commotions. There would have been no incursions by Missouri borderers into Kansas, either to establish slavery or control elections. There would have been no necessity, either, for others to have gone there partially to aid in preserving the country in its then condition. All would have been peace there. Had it not been done, that repose and quiet which pervaded the public mind then would hold it in tranquillity to-day. Instead of startling events, we should have quiet and peace within our borders, and that fraternal feeling which ought to animate the citizens of every part of the Union toward those of all other sections.

“Sir, the events that are taking place around us are indeed startling. They challenge the public mind, and appeal to the public judgment ; they thrill the public nerve as electricity imparts a tremulous motion to the telegraphic wire. It is a period when all good men should unite in applying the proper remedy to secure peace and harmony to the country. Is this to be done by any of us, by remaining associated with those who have been instrumental in producing these results, and who now justify them ? I do not see my duty lying in that direction.

“I have, while temporarily acquiescing, stated here and at home, everywhere uniformly, that when the tests of those measures were applied to me as one of party fidelity, I would sunder them as flax is sundered at the touch of fire. I do it now.

“The occasion involves a question of moral duty ; and self-respect allows me no other line of duty but to follow the dictates of my own judgment and the impulses of my own heart. A just man may cheerfully submit to many enforced humiliations ; but a self-degraded man has ceased to be worthy to be deemed a man at all.

“Sir, what has the recent Democratic Convention at Cincinnati done ? It has indorsed the measure I have condemned, and has sanc-

tioned its destructive and ruinous effects. It has done more, — vastly more. That principle or policy of territorial sovereignty which once had, and which I suppose now has, its advocates within these walls is stricken down ; and there is an absolute denial of it in the resolution of the convention — if I can draw right conclusions — a denial equally to Congress, and even to the people of the territories, of the right to settle the question of slavery therein. On the contrary, the convention has actually incorporated into the platform of the Democratic party that doctrine which, only a few years ago, met nothing but ridicule and contempt, here and elsewhere, namely, that the flag of the federal Union, under the Constitution of the United States, carries slavery wherever it floats. If this baleful principle be true, then that national ode which inspires us always as on a battlefield should be rewritten by Drake, and should read thus : —

“ ‘Forever float that standard sheet !  
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,  
With *Slavery's* soil beneath our feet,  
And *Slavery's* banner streaming o'er us ?’

“ Now, sir, what is the precise condition in which this matter is left by the Cincinnati convention ? I do not design to trespass many moments on the Senate ; but allow me to read and offer a very few comments upon some portions of the Democratic platform. The first resolution that treats upon the subject is in these words — I read just so much of it as is applicable to my present remarks : —

“ ‘That Congress has no power under the Constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States ; and that all such States are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining to their own affairs not prohibited by the Constitution.’

“ I take it that this language, thus far, is language which meets a willing and ready response from every senator here — certainly it does from me. But in the following resolution I find these words : —

“ ‘*Resolved*, That the foregoing proposition covers, and was intended to embrace, the whole subject of slavery agitation in Congress.’

“ The first resolution which I read was adopted years ago in Democratic conventions. The second resolution which I read was adopted in subsequent years, when a different state of things had arisen, and it became necessary to apply an abstract proposition relating to the States to the territories. Hence, the adoption of the language contained in the second resolution which I have read.

“ Now, sir, I deny the position thus assumed by the Cincinnati convention. In the language of the senator from Kentucky [Mr. Crittenden], so ably and so appropriately used on Tuesday last, I hold that the entire and unqualified sovereignty of the territories is in Congress. That is my judgment ; but this resolution brings the terri-

tories precisely within the same limitations which are applied to the States in the resolution which I first read. The two taken together deny to Congress any power of legislation in the territories.

"Follow on, and let us see what remains. Adopted as a part of the present platform, and as necessary to a new state of things, and to meet an emergency now existing, the convention says :—

" 'The American Democracy recognize and adopt the principles contained in the organic laws establishing the territories of Kansas and Nebraska, as embodying the only sound and safe solution of the slavery question, upon which the great national idea of the people of this whole country can repose, in its determined conservatism of the Union, — non-interference by Congress with slavery in States and territories.'

"Then follows the last resolution.

" '*Resolved*, That we recognize the right of the people of all the territories, including Kansas and Nebraska, acting through the fairly expressed will of the majority of actual residents, and whenever the number of their inhabitants justifies it, to form a constitution, with or without domestic slavery, and be admitted into the Union upon terms of perfect equality with the other States.'

"Take all these resolutions together, and the deduction which we must necessarily draw from them is a denial to Congress of any power whatever to legislate upon the subject of slavery. The last resolution denies to the people of the territory any power over the subject, save when they shall have a sufficient number to form a constitution and become a State, and also denies that Congress has any power over the subject ; and so the resolutions hold that this power is at least in abeyance while the territory is in a territorial condition. That is the only conclusion which you can draw from these resolutions. Alas ! for short-lived territorial sovereignty. It came to its death in the house of its friends ; it was buried by the same hands which had given it baptism !

"But, sir, I did not rise for the purpose of discussing these resolutions, but only to read them, and state the action which I propose to take in view of them. I may — I probably shall — take some subsequent occasion, when I shall endeavor to present to the Senate and the country a fair account of what is the true issue presented to the people for their consideration and decision.

"My object now is to show only that the Cincinnati convention has indorsed and approved of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, from which so many evils have already flowed — from which, I fear, more and worse evils must yet be anticipated. It would, of course, be expected that the presidential nominee of that convention would accept, cordially and cheerfully, the platform prepared for him by his



party friends. No person can object to that. There is no equivocation on his part about the matter. I beg leave to read a short extract from a speech of that gentleman, made at his own home, within the last few days. In reply to the Keystone Club, which paid him a visit there, Mr. Buchanan said :—

“ ‘Gentlemen, two weeks since I should have made you a longer speech, but now I have been placed on a platform of which I most heartily approve, and that can speak for me. Being the representative of the great Democratic party, and not simply James Buchanan, I must square my conduct according to the platform of the party, and insert no new plank, nor take one from it.’

“These events leave to me only one unpleasant duty, which is to declare here that I can maintain political associations with no party that insists upon such doctrines ; that I can support no man for President who avows and recognizes them ; and that the little of that power with which God has endowed me shall be employed to battle manfully, firmly, and consistently for his defeat, demanded as it is by the highest interests of the country which owns all my allegiance.”

## CHAPTER XXV

### HAMLIN A FATHER OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

THE bonds broken that had held Senator Hamlin to the Democracy, he was now free to follow the impulses of his heart and help organize the anti-slavery elements into a national party. The action of the Democracy at Cincinnati, in indorsing the doctrine that slavery was national, freed thousands of men from their allegiance to that organization, and the growth of the party of freedom was rapid, phenomenal, from that time until it fought its first great battle. Mr. Hamlin's withdrawal from the Calhoun party helped swell the tide of Republicanism which was now rising at the North. The evidence of the newspapers of the day shows that Mr. Hamlin's abandonment of the slave-laden Democracy was the political sensation of the hour. He had entered politics in the days of Andrew Jackson, and to the young anti-slavery Democracy he seemed to have come down from the time of Old Hickory; he had led his party in Maine to many a victory, and for twelve years had been one of its accepted champions in Congress; he had been the follower and advocate of Benton, Wright, and Woodbury; his defection from his party was the removal of a pillar from the temple of the Democracy. But the country at large had not been prepared for Mr. Hamlin's exit from the Democratic party. His course created, therefore, all the greater exultation among the friends of freedom, and the greater dismay among the supporters of the slave party. His silence had served to enhance the importance of his rupture with the Democracy and the force of his powerful and unique declaration of independence. He had been just and generous to his party; he had waited until it stultified itself by its own act before he left it. But Senator Hamlin was now more than justified in his course of action. He had kept touch of elbow with his party in Maine, and now when he joined the rapidly growing Republican party, he brought his followers with him, swept the Pine Tree State out of the Democracy, and placed it at the head of the column of Republican States, where it has since remained for nearly half a century. This was the most important act of Mr. Hamlin's eventful life.

It is interesting to observe what the friends and foes of Free Soil had to say in regard to Senator Hamlin's course. The leading edi-

torial in the "New York Times," on June 13, was entitled, "The Flight from Egypt," and is as follows : —

"It is not often that the telegraphic wires have throbbed with a piece of intelligence calculated to cause such varying emotions as that which was sent to the extreme points of the Union last night from the capital of the nation. It was the announcement of the first genuine effect of the nomination of Buchanan, and the adoption of a platform by the Cincinnati convention approving the principles of the Douglas Democracy. It is the commencement of a flight from Egypt, we believe, of many a noble nature that has long been held in bondage by the inexorable Pharaohs of party. Honorable Hannibal Hamlin, who has represented the Democracy of Maine nine years in the United States Senate, and been a stanch member of the Democratic party, has been driven from his old associates by the action of the Cincinnati convention. He can stand the encroachments by the slave power no longer, and yesterday boldly declared in the Senate that hereafter he would use whatever power God had endowed him with to oppose the party which made the Kansas-Nebraska bill a part of its creed. Mr. Hamlin said he had been a silent member of the Senate for nine years, but his love of country, which was greater than his love of party, now compelled him to speak. And a noble speech he made, which would atone for twice nine years of silence. There was once a British member of the House of Commons who, during a lifelong time, made but one speech, but that was so eloquent and effective that it immortalized him ; and he is now known in history as single-speech Hamilton. What a mass of forgotten trash has been uttered in the Senate, while Mr. Hamlin sat silent ripening for the one brief speech that will make him famous ! It would be a happy thing for the country if we had a few more such single-speech senators."

The "Boston Journal" said, among other things : —

"Like many other high-minded Democrats, Mr. Hamlin cannot stand the new test which has been introduced into the creed of the party. He is a Democrat of the old school, — a disciple of Jefferson, and declines to follow the fortunes of a party which has departed so widely from first principles, and which makes the support of slavery the highest purpose of its political action. Mr. Hamlin voted consistently against the Nebraska bill, believing it to be a great moral and political wrong, but, unlike some other Northern Democrats who opposed the bill in Congress, but have not the moral courage to array themselves against the administration, he could not 'acquiesce' in a wrong, the bitter fruits of which the country is daily reaping. . . . Mr. Hamlin could not consistently remain in the party, and in withdrawing from it, he has, with a delicacy which does him credit, resigned his place as chairman of the Committee on Commerce to which he was appointed as a Democrat. The course of Mr. Hamlin derives the more importance from the fact that he undoubtedly represents a large class of Democrats in his own State and elsewhere, who can no longer act with their party, and will not support Mr. Buchanan and the platform which he 'most heartily approves.'"



The "New York Tribune" said in part :—

"Mr. Hamlin is one of the foremost men of his State, of spotless integrity, scrupulous fidelity to principle, and of extensive personal influence. He opposed the Nebraska bill quietly but firmly; he henceforth opposes that party which makes that bill its shibboleth. His declaration must have great weight with the other Democrats who still cherish a lingering devotion to free soil and free speech."

The comments of the Democratic press of Maine on Mr. Hamlin's repudiation of their party are both interesting and instructive. The Democratic leaders of this State favored the nomination of Buchanan. Nathan Clifford, John Appleton, and George F. Shepley, three of the Portland leaders, influenced their delegation at the Cincinnati convention to vote for Buchanan. He recognized their claims by appointing Mr. Clifford associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, by making Mr. Appleton first assistant secretary of state, and finally minister to Russia, and by reappointing Mr. Shepley United States district attorney for the district of Maine. The Maine followers of Mr. Buchanan had, therefore, more than one reason for disliking Mr. Hamlin's rejection of their chief. Mr. Appleton, who is not to be confounded with the eminent late chief justice of the State, was then editor of the "Eastern Argus." He was a man of unusual ability and character, and in previous years had indorsed the Wilmot Proviso and supported Mr. Hamlin. But adhesion to party had begotten in him that kind of conservatism that kept many good men within the ranks of the Democracy. Portions of Mr. Appleton's attack on Mr. Hamlin in the "Argus" of June 16, 1856, may be quoted :—

"Ever since the Wilmot Proviso was first introduced in Congress Mr. Hamlin has been gradually but surely tending towards the political precipice over which he has now taken his fatal plunge. . . . For years Mr. Hamlin has been hovering on the confines of the party half claimed by the opposition, and rendering them aid and comfort by his peculiar position. The troops he could no longer control have long since left us. Last fall he voted against us at the polls. [This is not true.—Ed.] He now follows his baggage and men into the ranks of the opposition. We congratulate our political friends that he has at last defined his position. . . . The Democracy of Maine have no representative in the Senate of the United States. The man whom they have twice elected to that office, and whom they have loaded down with favors for twenty years, has proved unfaithful to their principles and joined their enemies. . . . The Democratic party was never in a better condition to part with false friends, or withstand the assaults of open enemies.

"The reason given by Mr. Hamlin for his desertion denotes a foregone conclusion in his mind. He complains of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Yet for all practical purposes this repeal was embodied in the

platform of 1852. As a matter of principle, there is nothing in the resolutions adopted at Cincinnati which was not contained in the compromises of 1850 and the Baltimore resolutions of 1852. We do not understand how any man who could support the latter can hesitate to support the former. But in point of fact who proposes to restore the Missouri Compromise? In joining the opposition, has Mr. Hamlin any expectation that the policy of the government on this subject will be changed? Is there any longer a doubt that the principles of self-government embraced in the Kansas act will be sustained by the people? Is any party yet so infatuated as to raise the standard of repeal and state issues on that result? . . . The opposition expend their time and energies only in creating a wicked excitement upon incidental subjects. . . . In vague (sic!) terms they shout denunciation against slavery; but they propose no practical remedy for it, and only lash the public mind into a worse than useless rage. They hold indignation meetings about the attack on Sumner; but if every man, woman, and child in the country were to join in their resolves, and shout Amen! to their violent outcries, how would this change the conduct of affairs in Kansas, or affect the future policy of the government? They shriek daily anathemas against Border Ruffianism in Missouri; but nobody defends Border Ruffianism. . . . Their sole capital is agitation, — constant, unceasing violent agitation. He [Buchanan] will have the full confidence of the whole country, and will be able to give it repose. Mr. Hamlin will oppose him; but a large majority of the people of Maine will give him a warm and enthusiastic support."

There was a column or more of this. The only comment to be made is that it was after all an elaborate, though unintentional, testimonial to Senator Hamlin's consistent devotion to the principles of Free Soil. The argument also shows how blind good and prominent men were to their real duty. When it is remembered that the Maine Democracy had eminent leaders at this time, such as Nathan Clifford, George F. Shepley, John Appleton, James W. Bradbury, Robert P. Dunlap, — and many other upright men, — the more clearly Mr. Hamlin's course stands out in relief.

The blatherskite view of Mr. Hamlin's departure from the Democracy was expressed in the "Bangor Democrat," the newspaper which called him a "disunionist," and urged his defeat in the senatorial campaign of 1850. Among other things, this journal said of Mr. Hamlin's notice of withdrawal: —

"It was only a statement of a preëxisting and notorious fact, as long ago he 'fell from grace,' his fall having commenced with opposition to the reannexation of Texas, and progressed slowly but steadily until he reached his present level. Occasionally he has paused in his downward career, but it was only a halt as if for rest and to find the best and easiest path to reach the bottom. . . . For his last election to the Senate he is indebted to the Abolitionists, and he now proposes to pay that debt and to render services

which entitle him to reelection at the hands of the Black Republicans. . . . For years many of the national Democrats of this State have had no confidence in him as a party man. He has done more than any other person to abolitionize it, and create a sectional sentiment. There is nobody to go with or follow him to the Black Republican party."

Other comments equally prophetic and amusing might be cited, but enough has been reproduced to give an idea of the rancorous partisanship Mr. Hamlin had to contend with when he vindicated his principles in 1856. But the open-minded, progressive people of Maine raised one voice in approval of his course; indeed, as soon as he officially severed his connection with the Democracy, a spontaneous demand came from the Republicans of Maine that Mr. Hamlin should be their candidate for governor in the coming election. This was the first effect produced in Maine by Mr. Hamlin's exit from the Democracy, and is alluded to now, although the incident is more fully explained later. He was undoubtedly embarrassed by this movement, for he felt himself in a peculiar position. He wanted to be guided by his delicate sense of propriety. The truth is, when Mr. Hamlin resigned the chairmanship of the Committee on Commerce, he would have relinquished his seat in the Senate also if circumstances had permitted. But Samuel Wells was now governor of Maine, and although a man of high personal character, he supported the Pierce administration, and would have appointed a Pierce follower to succeed Mr. Hamlin. Thus if the latter had resigned his post in the Senate, the anti-slavery party would have lost a vote, and the slave party would have gained one in that body when the Kansas troubles were an issue before Congress. Mr. Hamlin reasoned that he should remain in the Senate to oppose the plots against Kansas; his sense of delicacy persuaded him that if he should take the nomination for governor, he should then give up his chair in the Senate. He did not see how he could hold two positions at the same time. He came to Maine several times, and sincerely urged his friends to take another man. There was only one way to overcome Mr. Hamlin's scruples, and that was to force the nomination on him. This was done.

While affairs in Maine were developing in this manner, the Republican party held its first national convention. By a happy coincidence this took place in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence, and on the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill—the 17th of June. Never since the gathering of the fathers of this republic was there a more patriotic assemblage of men brought together within the walls of that historic city. They were the fathers of the party which afterwards wiped out slavery, crushed a rebellion against the government, saved the republic, and dedicated it anew to the preservation of human liberty and the advancement of civilization.



They came together to enforce a fundamental doctrine of the Constitution, — to preserve the liberty of the individual, whereby the free-born citizens of the North could prevent a selfish party, not content with the entire territory of the South, from forcing slavery into their lives. The Declaration of Independence was the first plank in their platform; the extinguishment of the "twin relics of barbarism," slavery and polygamy, in the territories, their slogan. Abolitionists, Whigs, and Democrats could stand together on this platform. Joshua R. Giddings, Horace Greeley, Hannibal Hamlin, Henry Wilson, John P. Hale, Charles Francis Adams, John A. King, David Wilmot, Preston King, Edwin D. Morgan, George W. Julian, Zachariah Chandler, Ben Wade, Galusha A. Grow, N. B. Judd, Henry S. Lane, Robert Emmet, Caleb B. Smith, Owen Lovejoy, and many others whose names are now historic in national or state records were among the leading men at this convention.

Senator Hamlin attended the convention out of sympathy with the cause it represented. But it would appear that he had another reason for being present. His retirement from the Democracy only five days before the Republican Convention opened was a source of congratulation and live interest to the delegates flocking to Philadelphia, and it seems that during the contest between Fremont and McLean for the nomination for President an undertow of sentiment developed in favor of Senator Hamlin as a compromise candidate. The members of the Maine delegation received the suggestion with enthusiasm, and, without Mr. Hamlin's knowledge or permission, at once prepared to present his name to the convention. This was one of several incidents that connected Mr. Hamlin's name with the presidency which he never mentioned to his family. The circumstance was learned through a letter Joseph Bartlett, editor of the "Bangor Jeffersonian," and a member of the Republican National Executive Committee, wrote to Mr. Hamlin the day before the convention was opened. It is known that Senator Hamlin immediately left Washington, and went to Philadelphia for the purpose of stopping this movement. This emphasized his unwillingness to become a presidential candidate. He had seen enough of that high office to understand its great responsibilities. He preferred to be a senator rather than President.

Mr. Hamlin's choice for President was John McLean, of Ohio, whose high character, ability, long public experience as senator, post-master-general, and associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, and pronounced anti-slavery convictions, indicated him, in Mr. Hamlin's opinion, as the safest man for the convention to name. But the popular demand was for John Charles Fremont, whose pic-

turesque exploring expeditions in the Rocky Mountains and the far West had given him an interest in the public eye that few men of his day could claim. He was young, brave, able, and dashing; his title, the "Pathfinder," was a name to conjure with among the masses. Youth and enthusiasm dominated the convention, and Fremont was nominated by a vote of 359 to 196 for McLean. William L. Dayton, one of the best men New Jersey ever produced, was taken for Vice-President from a number of competitors, one being Abraham Lincoln, who received 110 votes. He was so little known at that time outside of the Northwest that when his name was presented inquiries were heard, "Who is he?" Mr. Hamlin, it is needless to say, gave his hearty support to the ticket, Fremont and Dayton, and forthwith entered into the campaign,—a contest, the like of which the country had never seen before, and has never seen since. The Republican cause was right, and the North was stirred as never before. The masses were beginning to see that if they did not wish to hear the crack of the slave driver's whip in their streets, and witness the sale of human flesh and blood, they must stand by the party of Free Soil.

Republican enthusiasm overran the North as fire spreads over a prairie. Verily, the hilltops were lighted. Immense ratification meetings were held. One of the first—which was long famous in the annals of Massachusetts politics—took place at Faneuil Hall, on June 23. This is of personal interest. It was at this meeting that Senator Hamlin made his first Republican speech, which undoubtedly formed the basis of his speeches in the memorable campaign that followed in Maine. This occasion attracted an overflowing crowd, and was a night of jubilation and excitement. The scene as described by the newspapers was stirring indeed. Old parties and issues were forgotten. "Free Soil and Fremont" was the cry. Thomas D. Eliot, a former Whig representative in Congress, with whom Mr. Hamlin entertained very cordial relations, was the presiding officer. The newspaper reports described Mr. Hamlin's reception as the dramatic scene of the evening. Unfortunately, only a rough report of his speech was given,—for shorthand reporting was not commonly employed by the newspapers at that time. Many of the main points were undoubtedly expressed in the reporter's own words. Yet the substance was saved and is herewith presented:—

"Your cheers assure me that the spirit of your Puritan fathers glows within your bosoms. For the first time in my life my foot has trod upon the soil where was shed the blood of the first martyrs of the Revolution; for the first time I stand within these hallowed walls, and there comes an echo responsive from every bosom; within these walls three fourths of a century ago shouts for freedom were raised, and rocked them even as now.

The infant form of liberty was cradled here, and you have gathered to protect its manly and matured form. Here we should feel the sentiments that inspired the souls of Adams, Otis, and Warren. Their revolution was that of force; our revolution is that of the ballot-box. These are revolutionary times,—times when your cheers should fill with dismay every Hunker Democrat in the old Bay State. [Cheers.] I tell the honest Democrats of Massachusetts,—and I tell you all,—the train is in motion, and unless they jump on soon, the cars will be gone and they will be left behind.

“There is in this struggle but a single issue,—liberty against slavery. The Hunker press of the North and the South have had the boldness for the first time to stand forth and avow their position. It is no longer the question of abolition at the South, but it is whether slavery shall not be extended over the whole North; not whether the negro slaves shall be emancipated, but whether the free laboring men of the North shall not be reduced to the level of the slaves. [Cries, ‘That’s it.’] It is a time for men of all classes to rally to the standard and preserve the institutions of freedom bequeathed to you by your fathers. The old party issues have no longer any force. Questions of commercial considerations now pass away before the rising of the dark issues of slavery. With the passing of these oldtime issues, I stand here side by side with one whom in former years I contended warmly on party issues of the day; but now it is one of the proudest days of my life that I can forget past feelings, and stand here to battle for the institutions of the North.

“It has been announced that I was a member of the Democratic party that was. [Laughter.] It has ceased to be a Democratic party in principle; it has inaugurated a policy that makes it a negro slave party, a sectional party, only more sectional than the Garrison Abolition party ever was.<sup>1</sup> A single point embraces its creed. No matter what may have been a man’s political antecedents,—he may have been steeped to his lips in Whiggery; he may have been dyed in Federalism,—if he comes up to the standard of slavery he is as white as the driven snow in the eyes of this Democracy. It has no other issue than slavery propagandism. We are called a sectional party; but while it is true that we do not number quite as many men at the South as the Democratic party does at the North, my word for it, sir, we will have more men with us from the South than they will from the North, if the North but stands by the doctrines of Washington, Jefferson, and Madison.

“There is something in this contest with slavery that grinds out the spirit of men. God knows how often I have seen a representative of the North yield up the rights of the free laborer to the slave power of the South.

<sup>1</sup> The erratic attitude of the Abolition party was expressed by William Lloyd Garrison, who said in the *Liberator*, “We dissent from the sentiment, ‘the disposition to divide the Union is very slight now,’ for it is widespread and growing every hour, and will undoubtedly be greatly increased by the triumph of ‘Border Ruffianism’ in the person of James Buchanan. There is strong ground for believing that he will be the last President of the United States, in which case the jubilee is not far distant.”



Sectional are we? Why, sir, we have a principle as broad as our common country. . . . The Southern slaveholders know in their hearts and consciences that they are sustaining doctrines that are wrong. We support a principle that is national, that applies to the whole country. Our opponents seek to foist on the country that which belongs only to the local laws of the South. Which is the sectional, which is the national party? Such are the two parties.

"The Democracy, at its recent convention at Cincinnati, inaugurated the policy that neither the people of the territories nor Congress had the right to control the institution of slavery in our territories. We might as well believe that the citizens of Massachusetts could not by a system of quarantine exclude the yellow fever from their State. [Cheers.] But this policy of the Democratic party is the alchemy through which everything it distills enters into the government. The Missouri Compromise was repealed only and solely to extend the peculiar institution, and the fruits of that repeal we see on every hand. We see desolation in our territories; men murdered, women fleeing from their homes with babies clinging to their bosoms! Yet we are told that this Democratic policy should command our respect. It is but the legitimate fruits of this policy that we witness at the capital of the nation. What is it but the Democratic policy that shoots hotel waiters, cowhides editors, prostrates senators in the halls of Congress? It is the legitimate fruits of that policy that finds support in this administration, indorsement at the Cincinnati convention which nominated that person who is to carry out precisely the same principles the present administration is sustaining.

"I appeal to the laboring men of Massachusetts. Will they stand up for such a party standing on such principles? [Cries of 'No! No!'] Labor lies at the foundation of the prosperity of every government. Labor builds up the cities, delves in the mines, works in your machine shops, sends your canvas across the trackless deep. And I ask the laboring men of Massachusetts as a laboring man, — for I am one myself, — Will you sustain a policy that would degrade you beside the slave? [Cries of 'No! No!']

"I know Mr. Buchanan well, and it is consoling to know that he was nominated pledged to support the present administration, — this administration which came in by accident and goes out by design. . . . This much I would say of our political opponents: always treat them truthfully and fairly. ['Good! That's right!'] . . . James Buchanan has been a conservative man, but he is a different man standing on the Cincinnati platform. While he is a statesman of eminent abilities, he is peculiarly fitted for his present position, because he has always been ready to adopt any opinion to advance himself. During the war of 1812 he was a Federalist, and now he is a modern Democrat. Was he not in favor of and against the national bank? Was he not in favor of protection in Pennsylvania, and is he not now running on a platform that typifies free trade run mad? Moreover, is it not true that he once stood up in Pennsylvania a gallant defender of the freeman? Did he not denounce the aggressions of the slave

power in 1821? But does he not support slavery under the new dogmas of his party's creed? I know no prominent question nor measure which has agitated this country during the last twenty years on which Mr. Buchanan has not been on both sides. [A hiss.] It has been said that the hiss of a goose once saved Rome; but all the hisses in Massachusetts cannot save the Hunker Democracy. [Roars of laughter.] . . . Are you ready, men of Massachusetts, for the contest? [Cheers and 'Yes! Yes!'] Kindle, then, the fires; throw out your banners to the breeze, with the legend inscribed, 'God and the right,' and in that sign we will conquer."

Mr. Hamlin proceeded to Portland, where the Republicans of Maine fired their first big gun of the campaign. This occasion was described by the press of Portland as one of the most notable in the history of political parties in the State. It represented a spontaneous uprising of the masses, and in its personnel and speakers demonstrated that many distinguished leaders and thousands of the rank and file of the old parties had thrown off their former ties to ally themselves with the new party of freedom. Thomas A. Deblois, Mr. Hamlin's law preceptor and once an ardent Whig, was the presiding officer. Senator Fessenden and ex-Governor Kent, who had led the Whig party to great victories in Maine, now joined hands with Mr. Hamlin and Lot M. Morrill to speak for Republicanism. The newspapers did not report the speeches, but it appears that Mr. Hamlin delivered substantially the same remarks he made at Boston. He was received as the coming standard-bearer of the Republican party. The following comment of the "Argus," of June 26, on Mr. Hamlin's appearance at this meeting, was a prophecy that was not realized: "He has left a glorious and renowned party whose principles are ever young, and has united himself with a deformed monster whose embrace is destructive."

The next day, June 27, the Republicans of the Bangor district held their first ratification meeting, when Mr. Hamlin addressed his old neighbors for the first time as a Republican. This was another extraordinary outpouring of the people. Norumbega Hall was crowded to its utmost capacity long before the speaking began. Bangor was not only alive with excitement and interest, but the neighboring towns added to the throng. Hollis Bowman, mayor of Bangor, called the meeting to order; Elijah Hamlin was elected chairman; Captain Luther H. Eaton and William Sanford were appointed secretaries; Jabez True, William H. Mills, General Samuel F. Hersey, S. P. Strickland, J. A. Cushing, Eben French, John Short, Thomas A. Taylor, J. T. K. Hayward, John Williams, G. K. Jewett, John S. Chadwick, and B. S. Deane, of Bangor; Gorham Davis, of Bradford; Henry Richardson, of Old Town; Charles E. Dole, of Brewer; Reuben K. Stetson, of Hampden; J. Nickerson, of Orring-

ton; E. F. Crane, of Kenduskeag, and J. N. Swasey, of Bucksport, were the vice-presidents.

The first speech, by Noah Barker, of Exeter, a land surveyor of high standing, and afterward land agent of Maine, brought the situation in Kansas before the assembly. He had gone to Kansas a Pierce Democrat. But there he saw Border Ruffians murder men, drive women from their homes, sack houses, and stuff ballot-boxes with the connivance of the administration to make Kansas a slave State; and finally he himself was driven out of the territory at the point of a revolver, on the mere suspicion of being an Abolitionist. Lot M. Morrill followed with a renunciation of the Democracy, and then Senator Hamlin came forward. A dramatic scene occurred in the midst of his opening remarks. Mr. Hamlin spoke first to his brother Elijah:—

“I never return to my Northern home and the State of my nativity without thanking God that I was born in Maine, on free soil, and among free men. You and I, sir, for the first time in our lives, stand upon the same political platform, and battle for the same great cause. And let me tell you, sir, that that cause involves the destiny of your country and mine. When you were the candidate of the great Whig party for governor of our native State, in which we both feel so much pride, you did not receive my suffrage, and when I was the humble candidate of the late Democratic party for its national representative, I did not receive your vote. Now, thank God, we stand firmly together upon a platform broad as the Union, and with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution for our principles. Those words, dear to every American, liberty and union, are emblazoned on it in letters of living light. Brother, I give you the right hand of political fellowship, and, God grant, may we always remain side by side in the cause of our country and human liberty.”

And so saying, Senator Hamlin extended his hand to Elijah. They embraced each other, and cemented new ties that were auspicious of a permanent union between anti-slavery Whigs and Democrats. Thus the compact of the two brothers made as boys was absolved. They could now stand together after a separation of more than a quarter of a century, and strive for the same political principles. Senator Hamlin continued after the cheering had subsided:—

“The times and the issue that is to be made call upon every patriot throughout our republic to decide whether liberty and the Union, or slavery and the Union, shall be the characteristic of our government. This is the only issue. The bank, the tariff, the revenue,—those old issues have passed into abeyance. The question we must settle at our next election, and settle forever, is whether the free labor of the North shall be degraded to an equality and a daily association with slave labor. It is whether our daily laborers shall be reduced to the miserable degradation of the poor white laborers of the South, whom even the slaves treat with con-



tempt. Already the South is demanding that slavery shall go into the Northern States in spite of state laws, state constitutions, and state rights. Four of the Southern States instructed their delegates to demand from the Cincinnati convention a distinct recognition of this principle. They have virtually obtained their demands. They are perfectly satisfied with the platform adopted.

"The aggressions of the slave power have been constant and pressing. It was the South that made the Missouri Compromise live in order to snatch a portion of free territory from freedom and curse it with slavery. Grown strong with increasing years and more States, and incited by the servility of Northern dough-faces, the slave power repealed that ordinance in order to secure the whole of the remaining territories of this Union, the President solemnly promised that he would not allow any further agitation of the slavery question during his official term. Whilst these words were yet upon his lips, Franklin Pierce entered into a conspiracy which in infamy and damnable consequences is only surpassed in the history of the world by the traitorous Judas. Common gratitude should have taught these traitors to have renominated New Hampshire's degenerate son; but although they knew that he was elected almost unanimously, he would have been beaten this time almost unanimously. The South is too cunning to re-use its blunted tools. The leaders of the slave power take a weak-backed man, use him for their degrading purposes, and then coldly send him home to everlasting disgrace. I speak next week in the home of Frank Pierce, and, God willing, I mean to free my mind there.

"The so-called Democratic party, although it has thrown overboard every Democratic principle of Jefferson, Jackson, and the great and good Silas Wright, — who died too early for his country's good, — the Democratic party is responsible for this intense excitement, for the murderous assault upon an eloquent and accomplished senator upon the floor of the Senate, for the blood-stained fields of Kansas, where freemen have been cruelly shot without provocation by citizens of the same republic. For all these high crimes and misdemeanors I arraign before the American people these Cincinnati aiders and abettors of the Border Ruffians. I charge these crimes upon them, — the undivided votes of the slave power in Congress sustain them; the resolutions at the Cincinnati convention indorsing the present administration sanction these crimes!

"But the Republican party is not sectional. It stands upon the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. It goes with Jefferson, with Jackson, with Wright, with Clay, with Webster, with the Adamses, with all the early patriots upon resistance to the extension of the slave power.

"The present dynasty of the slave oligarchy has put in nomination a man suitable for its purposes, — James Buchanan. He has been on every side of every important question since he has been in political life. I concede to him eminent abilities and spotless private life, and when I have said that, I have told all that can be enumerated in his favor. He is cold, haughty, and reserved. His social qualities are so frigid that a thermome-

ter to take his temperature must have the point of temperature somewhere below the degree at which mercury freezes. His frozen heart was never warmed by woman's charms, and so there can be nothing on earth that will soften him to any humanity.

"On the other hand, there is the young, the gallant, the chivalric Fremont, with the smack of victory even in his name. It rings clear as the bugle's call. He is the Columbus of the land. He has endured in the vast plains and mountain fastnesses of the great West all the hardships that human nature can endure. His occupation is that of the early manhood of Washington. He first planted the stars and stripes upon the Pacific coast. He was the first governor of California, her first senator in Congress. I have known him intimately for years. Before he was mentioned for the presidency, all who came in contact with him spoke of his wonderful genius, and conceded that he was one of the greatest men of the age. Born and educated in the South, he has always detested slavery. He loves free soil and free labor, for his heart is generous and manly. When he started for his last exploration, he was solicited to purchase a female slave for his wife Jessie and her young child, to aid them in his absence. His noble reply was, 'I love my wife as a husband should; I love my child as a father should; but Jess must work for her support before I will own one cent of property in a fellow being.'

"Let all who love their country forget and forgive past animosities and petty jealousies, and unite upon the broad national Republican platform."

The Democratic party held its state convention at Bangor on July 1. It was a numerous, enthusiastic gathering, and this contributed to blind the politicians to the drift of popular sentiment. The conservative force of party action was well illustrated by the presence of many honorable men, who had decided to remain with the Democracy although their consciences could not wholly approve its course. Robert P. Dunlap, four times governor of Maine, four years a member of Congress, four times president of the Maine Senate, and collector of the port of Portland, presided over the convention. Among the speakers were James W. Bradbury, who had just retired from the United States Senate; George F. Shepley, who then stood among the leaders of the Maine bar; John Appleton, who was editor of the "Eastern Argus," had served in Congress, and was to be first assistant secretary of state, under Buchanan; John C. Talbot, long a power in the Maine Democracy; and others, including Moses Macdonald, the only congressman from Maine who voted for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. From Dunlap to Macdonald was another way of reading the descent of the Democracy from Jackson to Buchanan. Governor Wells was unanimously renominated, indorsed by the ghastly faction called the straight Whigs, and the combination entered the fight absolutely confident of success.

The first state convention held in Maine that represented pure and undefiled Republicanism was the one that took place at Portland on July 8, 1856, and nominated Hannibal Hamlin for governor. There had been two so-called Republican conventions in 1854 and 1855, but they represented the interests of the Know-Nothing party, while recognizing the temperance element and the undeveloped Republican sentiment. The rise of the Know-Nothing party was phenomenal. At one time it numbered fully a million and three quarters members. Its growth was so rapid that many good men were swept from their anchorage into its ranks. But while the Know-Nothing party was an abnormal development of American politics in one way, it was really a bubbling of the political caldron in which the old parties were undergoing a transmutation. In Maine this organization had a brief existence. Senator Hamlin, for one, strongly opposed it on account of its proscriptive creed. For this reason he supported Wells for governor in 1855, which was before Mr. Wells had squarely identified himself with the progressive pro-slavery party. But this Republican convention was purged of any suspicion of having the taint of Know-Nothingism. Hundreds of men who, like Mr. Hamlin, had fought Know-Nothingism were delegates to the convention. But this phase of politics was swallowed up in the great convulsions that were now ending the old parties in Maine. The preservation of free soil and the liberty of the individual was the rallying call of this assemblage.

In its character, attendance, unanimity of purpose, and enthusiasm, the Republican Convention of 1856 has never been surpassed in Maine, according to the testimony of its survivors. It marked an epoch when men were moved by their moral convictions and sense of justice as never before since the organization of Maine into a State; and among the delegates were many who afterwards rose to national and state distinction as leaders of the party whose organization they then perfected. The convincing proof of the unanimous spirit that animated this assemblage is that it bestowed the nomination for governor on Mr. Hamlin against his wishes, and even before it could be definitely ascertained whether he would accept. This was in obedience to popular party demand, which had grown so strong that it was now irresistible. The newspapers of the day, the letters Mr. Hamlin received, the personal evidence of survivors, all show this, and pages might be written on this point alone if there were space. The unique feature was that Mr. Hamlin himself was the chief opposition to his own nomination, and he was sincerely desirous that another man should be chosen. This was conceded by his opponents afterwards. The truth is, Mr. Hamlin still feared that if he retained his seat in the Senate, and at the same time ran for governor, he might lessen



his party's chances of success. But the delegates met this objection in two ways : first, they showed that he was under no obligations to consider the feelings of the Hunkers ; second, they nominated him before he made his decision known.

There were about twelve hundred delegates in the convention, and more than eleven hundred voted for Mr. Hamlin. A few cast their votes for the presiding officer, Freeman H. Morse, as a compliment to him. Mr. Morse had advocated Mr. Hamlin's nomination, and, moreover, had just been chosen the Republican nominee for Congress in the Bath district. This substantially unanimous action of the convention was followed by the adoption of a resolution, expressing the wish and opinion of the assemblage that Mr. Hamlin should not resign his seat in the Senate. This relieved him of any personal responsibility that might attach to his appearance in the dual capacity of senator and candidate for governor. It was now a party affair, and as pressure was so powerful, Mr. Hamlin had to yield, and promise to accept the nomination. But apparently to make sure that he would run, delegates, after adjournment had been taken, sent him messages that would be interesting reading were there room for them. The purport may be gathered from three : One was from Charles J. Talbot, Mr. Hamlin's lifelong friend : "We will not excuse you ; you will take five thousand votes from the Democracy. It is your duty to run." The second, from Dennis L. Milliken, of Waterville, once a prominent leader : "The convention has nominated you. If you should come here and decline, the party would still vote for you." George H. Shirley : "You must accept ; God bless you."

No man could help being touched at this proof of confidence in his abilities of leadership, and when Mr. Hamlin saw that his nomination was clearly due to a spontaneous outburst in his favor, he rose to the occasion, and declared that he would fight the slave power as he had never fought it before. Then began a campaign that the veteran politicians of Maine assert has no equal, to their knowledge, in the annals of the nation, in point of responsiveness of the masses to the presentation of great moral issues, the dramatic surprises furnished, the tension of feeling produced, and exciting incidents evolved. Throughout, Mr. Hamlin's picturesque personality was the central figure in a procession of never-to-be-forgotten scenes by those who witnessed them. As a personal canvass nothing like it had been seen before in Maine ; to quote Thomas B. Reed, "It was a triumphal procession from one end of the State to the other." Mr. Hamlin was at the height of his mental and physical powers, in the prime of his imperial manhood. His heart and soul were in his work. The result was the crowning triumph of his long battle against the slave power.

At the beginning of the campaign the Republican leaders were doubtful of achieving a decisive victory; at the most, they hoped to save Maine from the Democracy by electing Mr. Hamlin by a majority of several thousand votes, — four or five thousand was regarded as the extreme limit. He who at the opening of the fight predicted a Republican landslide was set down as a dreamer or an erratic guesser. The conditions forbade sanguine expectations of a sweeping victory for either side. The vote at the previous election had resulted in a drawn battle. Governor Morrill, the Republican, Temperance, and Know-Nothing candidate, received 51,441 votes; Wells, Democrat, 48,341; Isaac Reed, Whig, 10,610. There was no choice by the people, and the Democrats and their Whig allies, having control of the legislature, chose Mr. Wells governor. Thus the Democrats and their Whig allies held the fort, and, moreover, they had all the reinforcements they wanted from Washington. Finally, in the disintegration of parties this year more Whigs came over to the Democracy, led by no less a man than George Evans, who, in Mr. Hamlin's opinion, was the most intellectual man Maine ever sent to Congress. When Evans was in the Senate, Clay said of him: "Mr. Evans knows more about the finances than any other man in the United States." When he left the Senate, Webster said "his retirement would be a serious loss to the government and the country." Alas! If Evans had only seen the slavery question right. He is now forgotten.

Although the outcome of the campaign appeared in doubt in the opening stages, yet when Mr. Hamlin took his place at the head of his party, he expected to carry the State by a substantial majority. But this was before he had felt the public pulse. After the campaign had fairly begun, his hopes of a sweeping victory strengthened as he read the signs of the times. He did not, to be sure, foresee in all its scope the revolution that was impending and which appeared to the country as if it had been produced by magic. He did, however, predict his election by a majority of 10,000 or 15,000 votes. This would have been regarded as a triumph of great magnitude, and there were but few leaders who could agree with Mr. Hamlin in his prophecy, much as they wanted to. But his estimate of his chances was not the result of a shrewd calculation; it was an expression of his philosophy of life, his knowledge of men. Out of his belief that life is development and progress, his faith in mankind and confidence in the honesty of others, there came an insight and foresight that a superior intellect could not possess unless it was united with rugged integrity of character and sincerity of purpose. Mr. Hamlin knew the masses of Maine. He had kept touch of elbow with them, and as he believed that "nothing was settled until it was ended right," so did he confidently believe he would succeed.

Senator Hamlin opened his campaign at Kittery, on August 4, when incidents occurred that at once filled him with absolute confidence in victory. Many descriptions have been given of this notable occasion. All agree that it marked a spontaneous uprising of the people, and showed that they felt that Mr. Hamlin had lifted the slavery issue from a low partisan level into the pure air of lofty statesmanship. It was also described as an occasion when Mr. Hamlin gave signal proofs of his wonderful personal influence over an audience. General Mark F. Wentworth, of Kittery, a pioneer Republican and a lifelong friend of Mr. Hamlin, gave several accounts of this scene, which may be presented in general terms: "The outpouring of the people was prodigious, but their attention and responsiveness to Senator Hamlin's speech were the more important feature. They came from miles around to hear him, and they stayed to the end. Mr. Hamlin was at his best, and he and the audience seemed to act and react on each other. While his speech was in the main that plain statement of fact which seems simple enough because it is the 'art that conceals art,' it was pervaded with Hamlin's earnest, sincere, and magnetic personality, and at times wrought the audience up to a pitch of great enthusiasm. It was a powerful argument, and stamped Hamlin a great man. One who was there can never forget that magnificent-looking leader, his clear, ringing tenor voice, or the scene of the multitude as they hung on his lips in breathless silence one moment, and broke into spontaneous cheers the next."

The interesting results that immediately followed Mr. Hamlin's opening speech appear to have vindicated his ability as a stump orator. Among his opponents and rivals in Maine were certain men who underrated him as a speechmaker, very much the same way that Mr. Lincoln's opponents and rivals underrated him. One who was in Congress with Mr. Hamlin said: "He has a rough, rude way of speaking that is effective with a certain portion of the crowd, but he is no speechmaker." This was the view of a jealous rival, and it may have affected others. As speech is an index to the personality, so were the speeches of Lincoln and Hamlin unique and original, because they were productions of unique and original men. Both avoided high-sounding phrases, big words, and the rounded period; each aimed at the popular understanding, and each knew how, in his own way, to present a great question in a manner that would make it a home truth to the average mind. Perhaps the ability to lead the masses in the right path is more important to the welfare of this republic than ability to dominate Congress or interest the well-educated, since the republic rests on the multitude. The value of a speech depends on the effect it has on the public, and Mr. Hamlin's speeches are to be judged from this point of view. The Kittery



meeting is a point in evidence. When Senator Hamlin closed, the great crowd lingered in an afterglow of enthusiasm, discussing and taking to heart the points he had made. At the same time many men thronged their way to Mr. Hamlin, and one after another said :—

“Senator, I have always been a Democrat, but now I am a Republican. You are right about the slavery question, and I will vote for you.”

In relating this incident to his son Charles, Mr. Hamlin said that he personally knew several of the men who thus addressed him and announced their conversion. “They represented the average type of citizen,” said he, “and reflected the drift of popular sentiment. When they told me that they should vote for me, I knew that we would carry the State.”

From this time on until the close of the campaign, Senator Hamlin spoke continually. He addressed as many as one hundred meetings in a little over a month's time. He met the people in the cities, towns, and at the cross-roads. He was buoyed up with that enthusiasm which comes from confidence of success, and, as one of his admirers said, “swept around the State like a whirlwind.”

The newspapers of the day did not attempt to record the speeches delivered except on rare occasions, and as Mr. Hamlin never wrote out even the substance of his remarks, no further account of his speechmaking can be given. He varied his remarks at different places, seizing opportunity to present new illustrations which were peculiarly suited to the localities he visited. But as to the effect of his speeches, there is abundant testimony in addition to the eloquent evidence furnished by the vote. One interesting and important witness was James W. Nye, who stumped a part of the State with Mr. Hamlin, and thus heard him on many occasions. Mr. Nye was subsequently a member of the United States Senate from Nevada, and was ranked as one of the wittiest and most effective speakers in that body. His popularity and ability may be judged from the fact that he was chosen by the Republican National Committee, in the presidential campaign of 1860, to speak with William H. Seward on a joint stumping tour through the Northwest. Senator Nye became a great admirer of Mr. Hamlin, in consequence of their association in the campaign of 1856. The following story is told by Charles E. Bliss, who was Mr. Hamlin's neighbor and personal friend for many years, and is well known in Maine as the superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company in Bangor, and also as postmaster of that city. Mr. Bliss said :—

“Senator Nye came into the telegraph office a few days before the end of the campaign, and after sending off some dispatches, broke out of his own accord about the campaign. He was full of it and bub-

bling with enthusiasm over Mr. Hamlin. 'What a wonderful man Hannibal Hamlin is,' said he, 'what a great man! He is unique. He is the most effective stump orator in the United States to-day. The people believe everything he says,—that's the point, they believe everything he says. I never saw a man with his power among the masses.'"

The Democrats made a stubborn fight and contested every inch of the ground. They not only had the help of able Maine men,—such as Governor Wells, Nathan Clifford, George F. Shepley, ex-Senator Bradbury, and others,—but they also had the assistance of Judah P. Benjamin, Howell Cobb, and other leaders of national reputation. Benjamin, who was then a senator from Louisiana, had a Mephistophelian cast of countenance. At Portland he made a crafty speech in which he pooh-poohed the Kansas outrages, and belittled the troubles as purely local affairs. But he showed the cloven foot when he threatened that the South would secede if it should not be allowed to carry slavery into the new territories. This was held over Northern heads as an alternative proposition, and probably frightened thousands of conservative men into voting for Buchanan. Howell Cobb, jovial and with an air of good-fellowship, also laughed at the "slavery bugbear." At Portland, on August 10, he spoke of Mr. Hamlin in this apparently disingenuous way: "I do not like to say anything about my friend Hamlin. I have been trying for ten years to keep him straight, and he has been the hardest man I ever had to deal with. I have talked to him like a brother; but that Herculean task of keeping friend Hamlin straight is reserved for somebody else. Perhaps these Black Republicans will try their hands on him."<sup>1</sup>

A few days before the election, the Free-Soil newspapers claimed that a large corruption fund had been raised by the federal office-holders with which to flood Maine. The "New York Tribune" charged, on July 30, that the Democratic National Committee at Washington had contributed \$15,000 to defeat Mr. Hamlin, and that that fund was to be increased by the levying of assessments on office-holders in Maine. The "New York Evening Post" the night before election charged that the corruption fund had been swelled to \$100,000. It is certain that if the pro-slavery Democracy would pooh-pooh the civil war in Kansas, they would not stop at a little thing like buying votes if they could find any to buy. The shrieks of their newspapers in Maine now furnish amusing reading; their distress is plain. Here is the final appeal the "Argus" made on September 6:—

"Will any man who loves his Bible and his God give his sanction and approval of the Republican doctrine promulgated by Anson Burlingame, 'that the times demand, and we must have, an anti-slavery Constitution, an

<sup>1</sup> *Eastern Argus*, August 11, 1856.

anti-slavery Bible, and an anti-slavery God,' by voting for Hannibal Hamlin? We trust not. We have reason to hope better things for those who call themselves the children of God."

That the Pierce administration sought in every way to defeat the Republicans is certain. One incident related by Josiah H. Drummond shows how the government machine was used to embarrass the Republicans, and how they were forced to checkmate it by their own efforts. Mr. Drummond was then a young lawyer living at Waterville. He was elected to the legislature that fall, became speaker of the House the next year, and entered the Senate in 1860, to be elected attorney-general of Maine. He has since taken a high rank at the Cumberland bar, and has supported Mr. Hamlin in many a notable contest. Mr. Drummond said :—

"We soon learned that the Democracy would contest every inch of the ground by fair means or foul. We wasted no time in meeting the emergency. For example, I learned that the Pierce postmasters were preventing Republican newspapers from being circulated. I left my law office, hired a cart, filled it with bundles of Republican newspapers, and started off at a gallop for the neighboring country towns. When I reached a town I would pull off my coat and shout to the crowd, 'Do you want any Republican newspapers?' How they would shout, 'Yes! yes, yes!' and flock around the cart! Then I would ask them if they wanted a speech. The Saturday before the election I drove sixty miles, and spoke in all six hours. But the excitement buoyed me up. The very air seemed like champagne. There never was a campaign like it in the country."

The Democracy was blind to the last to the signs of revolt in the air. The day of the election, Governor Wells predicted, in the presence of a friend of Mr. Drummond, that he would be elected over Mr. Hamlin by a majority of 10,000 votes. Mr. Drummond gave a vivid idea of the intense excitement and wave of jubilation that swept over the State :—

"We rushed to the telegraph station at Waterville, as eager for news as if a war was being fought. The telegrapher sat laughing. He was a Republican. 'What are you laughing at?' we shouted. 'Oh,' said he, 'just hear the wires buzz with great news.' We did not know a telegrapher could tell the news as it was sent over the wires, and there was a chorus of 'Non-sense!' But he laughed away. 'There goes a message from Unity: "Glory to God! Hamlin has carried the State by a whirlwind majority!" Here comes one from Dexter: "Hallelujah! Freedom carries the day. Hamlin wins."' We made him have the messages repeated in the Waterville office over his machine, and while they were coming it was a moment of delicious agony. But it was worth waiting for."

In Bangor, as well as in every other part of the State, the Republicans scented victory in the air, and as the time approached for the



returns to come in, by a common impulse they rushed to Norumbega Hall. Every seat was taken out, and the place was jammed with a palpitating mass of humanity. One who took an active interest in the occasion was John L. Crosby, a leading citizen of Bangor and long its city treasurer. His account of the scene is as follows:—

“Mr. Hamlin was the great commoner of Maine, and his personal canvass of the State met with an unprecedented reception. Yet it was difficult for either friends or foes to measure the extent of the revolution in the State. One of the most brilliant journalists ever connected with the Bangor press, a week before the election, appealed to the demoralized and motley opposition: ‘Let us make one more allied effort, and the sullen retreat of the Hamlin hosts, already begun, will become a complete rout.’ On election night I joined the throng going to Norumbega, when some one thrust his arm through mine and said, ‘Come, John, let’s go see the boys!’ It was Mr. Hamlin, who had just driven up post haste from Hampden to hear the news. He was filled with excitement, but even then he remembered to ask me something that was on his mind. Said he, ‘What’s that verse about “Sound the loud timbrel”?’ I hastily recalled the lines, and then he sprang through the cheering crowd on the stage, to be met with the most overwhelming welcome I had ever witnessed. When the glad uproar of thousands had ceased from sheer exhaustion, Mr. Hamlin lifted his arms, and in his ringing, clear voice recited Tom Moore’s lines:—

‘Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s dark sea!  
Jehovah has triumphed, — his people are free.’

“Never, I am sure, since ‘Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore,’ and Moses sang this song of triumph over the oppressors of his race, had the words been more fittingly spoken. The scene formed an unfading picture in the memory of those who saw it and heard it all.”

By midnight it was known that the Republican minority of 8000 votes the year before, had been turned into a Republican majority of 18,000; and finally, that Hannibal Hamlin had been chosen governor by an unprecedented plurality of more than 25,000 votes. Jehovah had spoken — and Maine was free.

The revolution in Maine caused the greatest jubilation among the Republicans, and consternation among the Democrats, throughout the country. It was unexpected, and the followers of Fremont thought that they already saw the dawn of a better day. But that was not yet come, though the light was piercing the clouds. In carrying eleven States, and throwing 1,341,264 votes for Fremont and Dayton, against 1,838,162 for Buchanan, and 874,534 for Fillmore, the Know-Nothing candidate, the young and undisciplined Republican party accomplished a result of which it might well be proud. Freedom or slavery in the territories was clearly the issue, and in the first trial the party of slavery was in an actual minority of nearly 400,000 votes, though it

had retained control of the government. The Republicans claimed that they had won a moral victory, and that the future was bright. Senator Fessenden wrote Mr. Hamlin: "We have fought and lost, but we have a noble party and a future before us." And Mr. Hamlin responded, "Amen!"

The closing incident of personal interest in Mr. Hamlin's career of this period was his marriage to Ellen V. Emery, the youngest daughter of Judge Stephen Emery, and a half sister of his first wife. The wedding took place at Paris Hill, Mr. Hamlin's old home, on September 25.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### GOVERNOR AND SENATOR

WHEN Mr. Hamlin became governor of Maine, it was well understood that he would be returned to the Senate as soon as the legislature was called on to act. The election of Buchanan had settled one thing, and that was that the agitation over slavery was bound to continue. The final acts of the wretched weathercock who was still President — his declaration one day that he had no power to stop the outrages in Kansas, his order the next for troops to proceed to the scenes of disorder ; his tearful assertions that he believed the troubles were local in nature ; his consistent removal of honest men from the governorship of that territory who would not sanction the hideous crimes perpetrated there — were plain evidence of the pressure the slave power would put on its new tool as soon as he entered the presidency. The whole programme of infamy, which united the government and Border Ruffians in a conspiracy to force slavery into Kansas by flooding the territory with cutthroats and United States soldiers, to stuff ballot-boxes, to intimidate citizens, to set up a fraudulent legislature, enforce their barbarous laws, burn towns, drive away Free-Soil men, and even shoot them down, — this was to continue under Buchanan. Events made Mr. Hamlin the logical choice of his party for the Senate. He was an anti-slavery leader of long experience, and knew how to fight the enemy. Thus Mr. Hamlin's administration as governor of Maine was only an episode in his life, and may be briefly related.

He was inaugurated on January 8, 1857. The ceremony was simple. The address was a clear and comparatively short discussion of national and state topics. In speaking of the presidential election, Governor Hamlin said that the result foretold with "unerring certainty the ultimate triumph of the great principles for which the Republican party had struggled." In tracing the early history of the government to demonstrate that its fathers designed it should be one of freedom and not of slavery, he declared that it was "time for all who desire to restore the government to what it was under Washington and Jefferson to unite with undivided ranks for that purpose." In foreshadowing the intention of the incoming Buchanan administration to extend slavery, Governor Hamlin asserted that it was the



duty of the Republican party "to maintain the right of freedom by opposing in every legal mode the extension of slavery over the territory of the United States, and by persevering in that effort firmly and consistently to the end." In depicting the "deplorable spectacle" presented in Kansas which made "free government" a "miserable mockery," Governor Hamlin said that the existing state of affairs "furnishes only a true exhibition of what results from attempts to establish and extend slavery;" and in connection with this he urged Maine to appropriate a liberal sum to aid those of her citizens who had gone to Kansas to extend civilization and might be in need of the necessities of life.

Another subject of interest Governor Hamlin considered in his address was the cultivation of agriculture with reference to the desirability of "teaching agricultural chemistry in the schools," or "of endowing some of the existing literary institutions of the State" for that purpose. He felt the need of providing the youth of the State, who could not or did not desire to take a course of study at a classical college, opportunity of pursuing a practical and liberal course of education which would fit them for the actual duties of life. He believed that the State should interest itself in this institution, to raise the level of intelligence, and also, as he urged at this time, because "a wise system which shall develop our agricultural resources will tend to check the great emigration of our citizens to other sections," that is, he wanted to keep Maine's young men at home. At this time, it should be remembered, the project was being discussed out of which came the American college of agricultural and mechanical arts. Mr. Hamlin followed this institution from its inception to its realization, and it had few stronger friends than he. Another chapter is devoted to this subject; the incident introduced in his inaugural address is referred to and explained only to show how he was thinking with regard to this college long before it was established.

Another point in the address of importance to the history of Maine was Governor Hamlin's reference to the removal of Woodbury Davis<sup>1</sup> from the Supreme Judicial Court. Judge Davis would not, at the behest of the Wells administration, render a decision in favor of a pro-slavery candidate for sheriff. This was one of the issues of the state campaign, and it cost Mr. Wells many votes. Mr. Davis's removal was an outrage on the judiciary. To quote Governor Hamlin: "At the last session of the legislature, one of the justices of the Supreme Court was arbitrarily, if not unconstitutionally removed by address. In the opinion of the best legal minds of the State, the act was entirely unconstitutional. Whether so or not, it was at least con-

<sup>1</sup> This was a celebrated case. Rufus Choate made the argument for Judge Davis.

fessedly predicated upon an error of judgment, honestly exercised in the discharge of official duty, upon a matter of indisputable jurisdiction. . . . If for such a cause a judicial officer may be removed in the malice or madness of party organization, where is the independence of the judiciary, and what can it become but the mere instrument of party?" Perhaps the most important act of Governor Hamlin's administration was his restoration of Judge Davis to the bench, upon which the latter remained until 1865, when he voluntarily retired.

The record of Mr. Hamlin's administration would not be complete without a reference to the council and legislature which were brought into power at this time, and were the first exponents of pure Republicanism to hold these positions. A partial list will indicate the kind of men these stirring times brought to the front in politics in Maine. In the council were Abner Coburn, of Skowhegan, who was subsequently one of the war governors of Maine, and a noted philanthropist; Benjamin F. Eastman, of Strong, a founder of the Republican party in this State, and a lifelong friend of Mr. Hamlin; J. S. Monroe, for many years probate judge of Piscataquis County, and another personal friend of the governor; and Nathaniel A. Joy, an active leader of Ellsworth. The changed conditions of political affairs was reflected in the Senate, which had twenty-nine Republicans and one Democrat. To paraphrase Dr. Holmes, fate conspired to save this lone representative of his party from obscurity by naming him Smith.<sup>1</sup> The president of the Senate was Joseph H. Williams, of Augusta, a man of decided ability and scholarly attainments. He succeeded Mr. Hamlin as governor, and served with credit to himself and the State. Lyndon Oak, of Garland, was a conspicuous anti-slavery leader and one of the cleanest and most useful legislators Maine ever produced. William R. Hersey, of Lincoln, was one of the Hamlin guard in the senatorial fight of 1850. Wyer G. Sargent and Samuel Wasson were representative men of Hancock County. Charles P. Chandler was a typical anti-slavery man of Piscataquis. Enoch W. Woodbury, of Bethel, was a leader of prominence in his district. William Connor, of Fairfield, — father of Selden Connor, a distinguished soldier and later governor of Maine, — was one of the Whigs who united with the anti-slavery Democrats in 1856.

The House had one hundred and fifteen Republicans and twenty-one Democrats. Charles A. Spofford, a brilliant lawyer of Deer Isle, was speaker. Among the leading members were Thomas A. Deblois, of Portland, one of Mr. Hamlin's strongest friends and a leading lawyer of the State; Josiah H. Drummond, then of Waterville, whose

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Smith used to issue calls for a Democratic senatorial caucus, and act as the caucus and presiding officer. He was truly the captain and crew of the Democratic "Nancy Jane."

record in this House made him speaker of the next ; General Samuel F. Hersey, of Bangor, who was then one of the principal lumbermen of the State and afterwards of the country, and a personal friend of the governor ; William T. Johnson, the former editor of the "Augusta Age" when it was an anti-slavery newspaper, and another member of the anti-slavery guard of 1850 ; Charles Danforth, of Gardiner, who was subsequently for many years a member of the Supreme Court of the State ; Nathaniel C. Deering, of Hampden, who afterwards served in Congress from Iowa, and was another lifelong friend of Mr. Hamlin ; Seth L. Milliken, then of Camden, who represented the Belfast district in Congress for ten years with ability ; W. C. Hammatt, a former Whig and collector of the port of Bangor, and a close friend of Governor Hamlin ; N. G. Hichborn, of Stockton, who later was the state treasurer ; Parker P. Burleigh, land agent of the State ; Theodore C. Woodman, of Bucksport, whose name was a synonym for integrity ; Jeremiah Tolman, of Rockland, a trusted leader in the Senate campaign of 1850 ; Samuel H. Allen, of Thomaston ; Isaac C. Kimball, of Bethel ; Samuel H. Houghton, of Greenwood ; Josiah L. Hobbs, of Waterford ; Samuel P. Strickland, of Bangor ; Solomon Dunning, of Charleston ; Josiah Crosby, of Dexter, and others, who all helped establish the Republican party in Maine, and are entitled to remembrance on that account.

The same week Mr. Hamlin became governor of Maine, the Republican legislators nominated him for another term in the Senate. There were some who were of the opinion that it might be better for Mr. Hamlin to remain in Maine for a few years at the head of his party, to strengthen it during the Buchanan administration. Mr. Deblois made a powerful speech in the caucus exposing the sophistry of this argument, and showing that the prestige which he gained in the campaign of 1856 would strengthen his standing and influence as a national leader. Lot M. Morrill was one of the leaders who urged Mr. Hamlin to take the nomination for governor, and said that he should be returned to the Senate if he desired ; yet to Mr. Hamlin's surprise, Mr. Morrill, notwithstanding his course of action, allowed his name to be presented as a candidate. But the sentiment was so strong in favor of Mr. Hamlin that there was no contest worth recording. This was the first time, by the way, when Mr. Hamlin had been a candidate for the Senate that his party machinery was not arrayed against him. His most brilliant campaigns were won against the machine. He resigned the governorship on February 26, and on March 4, 1857, the same day on which James Buchanan entered the presidency, resumed his seat in the Senate.

And now the die was cast. In his first message to Congress Mr. Buchanan asserted that the slavery troubles were over, placed the



blame of the agitation on the clergy, announced himself in favor of a constitution agreeable to the majority of the people of Kansas, and seriously compromised the Supreme Court by virtually pledging it to deliver an opinion in the near future that would finally remove the slavery issue from the realms of political action. Mr. Buchanan's hint at the forthcoming opinion of the Supreme Court was based on positive knowledge. In a few days Chief Justice Taney handed down his now historic deliverance on the Dred Scott case. The essence of this was that the negro could not become a citizen because he was a chattel, that Congress had no right to interfere with slavery in the territories, and finally that the Missouri Compromise was an unconstitutional measure, and its repeal justified. This opinion was regarded as obiter dicta, in part, but it was substantially concurred in by a majority of the justices, though strong dissents were taken by Justices McLean and Curtis. The action of the court was an apparent triumph for the slave power. The plot Mr. Hamlin exposed in his first speech in the Senate, by revealing the meaning of the Clayton compromise bill, had at last borne fruit. The slave power had succeeded in bringing to its aid the highest tribunal in the land. The purport of the court's deliverance was that slavery was the organic law of the country; and thus fortified by the judiciary and supported by Congress, President Buchanan entered on the last act of the damnable conspiracy to force slavery into the lives of the free Northern people, — Kansas being his first objective point.

Under these circumstances Congress gathered in December. Although the slave power now controlled both branches of Congress, the executive, and the judiciary, it could not control the consciences and hearts of the men in the Senate and the House who represented the Republican party. The day of the cowardly "dough-face" was passing away; the day of the representative anti-slavery man of the North was dawning. On the other hand, the power of the conservative Southern statesman was gone. The word of the aggressive pro-slavery leader was the law of the new South. The changed condition of affairs was reflected in this Congress. The Republican wave had swept into the Senate and House men whose names are now historic, and had carried into private life others who had been towers of strength to the slave party. For the first time in the existence of the republic since slavery had become a political issue, there were two political parties in Congress that drew their lines entirely on this question. Not since the days of the Revolution had there been gathered together groups of American leaders who possessed so marked individualities, or who exerted so much personal influence among the masses, or stood for such widely antagonistic principles, as the principal senators and representatives in this Congress. The names of

many will endure as long as memory preserves the scenes in which they figured.

The Senate had sixty-two members, of whom twenty were Republicans, as against half a dozen before the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The Republicans were Hannibal Hamlin and William Pitt Fessenden, of Maine; Charles Sumner and Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts; John P. Hale and Daniel Clark, of New Hampshire; Jacob Collamer and Solomon Foot, of Vermont; Lafayette S. Foster and James Dixon, of Connecticut; James F. Simmons, of Rhode Island; William H. Seward and Preston King, of New York; Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania; Benjamin F. Wade, of Ohio; Lyman Trumbull, of Illinois; Zachariah Chandler, of Michigan; Charles Durkee and James R. Doolittle, of Wisconsin; and James Harlan, of Iowa. Seward was the leading spokesman; Fessenden the keenest debater; Chandler the rough Jupiter Tonans; Sumner the anti-slavery knight; Hale the free lance; Trumbull a sharp blade; Collamer was a constitutional authority; Wade a fighter; King weighty in council; Wilson an outspoken commoner; Clark a sound adviser; Cameron the great political manager of his day. Senator Hamlin's chosen associates at this time were Chandler, Wade, Cameron, and Clark. His friendship for Chandler, Wade, and Cameron extended over a period of many years. They were more than once called the four old guardsmen of the Republican senators of this time. They were unique men, and the story of their friendship is an unique and interesting record.

The entrance of Chandler, Trumbull, Doolittle, and Durkee into the Senate signalized the downfall of Hunkerism in the great Northwest. Chandler himself dethroned the king of the Northern Hunkers, General Cass, and Michigan was now a permanent Republican State. No man in the Senate better embodied the resolute, aggressive, and progressive Republican spirit of the Northwest than Zach Chandler, as the great senator from Michigan was familiarly known. He made himself felt the first day he took his seat in the Senate, and the little group of Republicans knew that a champion after their own hearts had come among them. At the outset Chandler and Senator Hamlin conceived a strong liking for each other. There was much in common between the two. Both were New England Yankees, men of the people, and they were equally ardent in their attachment to the Union and hatred of slavery. Chandler was a giant in every sense of the word. In point of resolute leadership, personal courage, and ability to sway the masses by sheer strength of individuality, Chandler certainly had no superior in his day—and who was his equal? In the Senate he was an immense force. In debating he used the short sword, in speechmaking the sledge hammer. From now on until

the end of his public career, Mr. Hamlin held no associate in closer intimacy or in more affectionate regard than Zach Chandler, with the exception of Lincoln, who always had the first place in his heart.

The new South had abler men in the Senate than in the House. The most prominent were Jefferson Davis, Robert Toombs, R. M. T. Hunter, James M. Mason, Judah P. Benjamin, John Slidell, David L. Yulee, Stephen R. Mallory, Trusten Polk, Clement C. Clay, Jr., Alfred Iverson, Benjamin Fitzpatrick, Albert G. Brown, and James H. Hammond, who were all identified with the Southern Confederacy. They were bold unto that degree of rashness expressed in the proverb, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." Douglas was the leader of the decimated Northern Democracy. David C. Broderick, of California, a man of romantic career and great possibilities of leadership, was his right-hand supporter. George E. Pugh, of Ohio; William Bigler, of Pennsylvania, and Jesse D. Bright, of Indiana, were Buchanan sympathizers. Sam Houston and Andrew Johnson were Southern Union Democrats. John J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, and John Bell, of Tennessee, were also now opposed to the slave power, and were the sole representatives of the Southern conservative Whig party in the Senate. James A. Bayard, of Delaware, appeared to be "on the fence." John C. Breckinridge, the Vice-President, was a tall Kentuckian, with the bearing of a Scottish chieftain, and was distinguished for his interesting personality, charm of manner, and sense of personal honor rather than for intellectual strength. He was only thirty-five, the youngest man yet elected Vice-President.

In the House there were a few more than eighty Republicans, whose superior courage and ability often enabled them to defeat a less well equipped majority. John Sherman, whose services as a statesman are to be ranked with the military achievements of William T. Sherman, his brother, began his national career in the preceding Congress. A powerful leader was Elihu B. Washburne,<sup>1</sup> of Illinois, tall, strongly built, genial in manner, and afterwards famous as the watchdog of the Treasury and father of the House. Israel Washburn, Jr., of Maine, Cadwallader C. Washburn, of Wisconsin, were brothers of Elihu, and men of great ability. Justin S. Morrill, of Vermont, author of the Morrill tariff, father of the American college of agricultural and mechanical arts, and later dean of the Senate, also entered on his long and useful career with this Congress. Another coming statesman, with an honorable record before him, was Henry L. Dawes, one of the most practical and upright men Massachusetts ever sent

<sup>1</sup> Elihu was the only one of the brothers who spelled the family name with the final *e*.



to the Senate. Anson Burlingame, the diplomat, was a forceful figure in this House. Galusha A. Grow was to be speaker of the next House, the first Republican to hold that office. Schuyler Colfax was a coming speaker and Vice-President. Reuben E. Fenton was a future governor and senator of New York, and so was Edwin B. Morgan. John A. Bingham, of Ohio, was a keen blade, whose flashes were worthy of William Pinkney. Francis P. Blair, Jr., was making himself felt in Missouri. Joshua R. Giddings, Owen Lovejoy, Nathaniel P. Banks, were among the older members. John Fox Potter, of Wisconsin, and a native of Maine, was a high-spirited Yankee, who named bowie knives as weapons of his choice when challenged by Roger A. Pryor to fight a duel. Another interesting Yankee was Eli Thayer, of Massachusetts, who organized the New England Emigrant Aid Company, to send men to Kansas to populate it with defenders of freedom. Freeman H. Morse, Stephen C. Foster, Charles J. Gilman, John M. Wood, and Nehemiah Abbott were other members from Maine. Henry Winter Davis, of Maryland, was the brilliant intellectual figure of this House.

Among the Democrats were some men of note. James L. Orr, of South Carolina, the speaker, was one of the first of the Confederate leaders to accept the result of the war and aid the Republican party to reconstruct the South. George H. Pendleton was a man of charming personality, and represented Ohio in the Senate with dignity and ability. He was also a defeated candidate for Vice-President on the ticket with McClellan in 1864. William H. English, of Indiana, was another Democratic aspirant for the vice-presidency, and was beaten in 1880. Lucius Q. C. Lamar, of Mississippi, was a man of great personal worth and scholarship, though of mistaken political convictions. The same might be said of J. L. M. Curry, of Alabama, a Confederate soldier, and subsequently an educator of note and our minister to Spain. S. S. Cox, then of Ohio, affectionately known as Sunset Cox, was now recognized as a genial wit. William S. Groesbeck, of the same State, was a lawyer of national reputation, and was later one of the counsel for Andrew Johnson in his impeachment trial. Among the extremists were Thomas L. Clingman, Lawrence M. Keitt, William Barksdale, Humphrey Marshall, and others identified with the Confederacy. John Hickman and Henry Chapman, of Pennsylvania, and Horace F. Clark and John B. Haskin, of New York, were a small group known as anti-Nebraska Democrats. Daniel E. Sickles was one of the pro-slavery Democrats who attained distinction in the Union army after the appeal to arms was made. Isaac I. Stevens, delegate from Washington Territory, and a native of Massachusetts, was another pro-slavery Democrat of the same kind. His great ability as a fighter — he was a West-Pointer — led his superior

officers to expect him to make a brilliant record ; but he was killed in the battle of Chantilly, at the same time Kearny lost his life. John Kelly, the subsequent "boss" of Tammany Hall, was another interesting Democrat in this House.

In returning to the Senate as a Republican, Mr. Hamlin was placed in necessarily antagonistic political relations with his Democratic colleagues, with whom he had coöperated on all issues save that of slavery. When a distinguished political leader leaves a party with which he has long been identified, he and his friends speedily learn the true estimate that his former associates placed on him. This occasion furnished an interesting opportunity to judge of Mr. Hamlin's personal status among the leaders of the Democracy who correctly understood him. Among men of this kind, Mr. Hamlin's change of party made no difference in the personal or official relations they had sustained with him. While they regretted his departure from the Democracy, they recognized and conceded that his motives were pure and that his course was entirely logical. On this point Hugh J. Anderson may be quoted. He had been a congressman from Maine, governor of the State, and now held the important position of commissioner of customs of the Treasury Department. He was always a Democrat. When Mr. Hamlin reëntered the Senate some Democrats, who did not know him personally, denounced him severely for leaving their party. Governor Anderson stopped them, saying, "You would not speak thus of Mr. Hamlin if you knew him. He is an absolutely sincere and honest man. He follows the dictates of his own conscience, and did he not have that right?"

Another view of Mr. Hamlin's personal status in the Senate, and the explanation of his strength among those who differed from him politically, was furnished by Henry L. Dawes, his personal friend and party associate in Congress for a period of nearly forty years. He wrote of Mr. Hamlin's personal qualities, in part, as follows : "Never losing that plain, simple, unaffected manner which belonged to the life his father had lived before him, he nevertheless acquired an ease, almost reaching gracefulness, in his intercourse with men and women, which came to be quite charming. He was a true gentleman, . . . one that every one recognized had no alloy in his composition, nothing but genuine sincerity in the hand he offered. . . . His conversation was piquant, crisp, and pungent, but there never was any sting in it. . . . Mr. Hamlin made no pretension to oratory, but nevertheless he was a debater of uncommon force and skill. He was distinguished for the cleverness and directness of his statement. His style was terse and crisp, with a good deal of the Yankee in the quaintness and aptness in putting things. His long service and absolute integrity added great weight to his opinions and

judgment. He, however, spoke rarely ; but in all legislative business — of far more importance at all times than oratory — he ranked among the first, and as a political adviser he was a leader. He was the soul of honor, as well in his private relations and public duties, as well in all political transactions. He was from the beginning a Democrat, and remained throughout life a Democrat, in every pulse and impulse.”<sup>1</sup>

In connection with this subject, an incident may be related that happened at this time, and illustrated Mr. Hamlin's personal strength with his Democratic colleagues in the Senate. But first some words of Charles Levi Woodbury, a lifelong leader of the Massachusetts Democracy, should be quoted : “ I knew Mr. Hamlin very soon after he entered Congress. But in the House and the Senate he had a personal influence independent of his political views, due greatly to his obliging kindness to his compeers in matters not of political principles, and his fidelity to his engagements.” The incident is independent of this, but Mr. Woodbury, being a party supporter of Buchanan and a constant visitor at Washington, knew Mr. Hamlin's power in the Senate. There were four Democrats from Maine to whom Mr. Buchanan professed great indebtedness for the work they accomplished in bringing the Maine delegation to his support when he was nominated. They visited him at his home before the Cincinnati convention, and said they were unpledged. After Mr. Buchanan became President he bestowed national offices on three, — one being one of the highest in his gift. The fourth he nominated for the position of commissioner of customs, to succeed Governor Anderson, and made this a personal issue with the Senate for confirmation. He need not be named. To quote Mr. Hamlin's words, in a letter to Senator Fessenden, “ he was an unmitigated scoundrel.” But his ability in buying votes, and fighting anti-slavery candidates for the Senate and the House, glossed his sins in the eyes of his party. Mr. Hamlin's word that this fellow was corrupt induced the Senate, a Buchanan body, to reject the nomination by a vote of more than two to one. Mr. Buchanan proved his loyalty to this man by appointing him to an office to which no confirmation was necessary.

Before dismissing this subject, it must be added that Senator Hamlin continued to take a prominent part in shaping practical legislation during the remainder of the ante-bellum period. In fact, the evidence of the “ Congressional Record ” would seem to indicate that while he was no longer the head of an important committee, he appeared to exert the same marked influence in the transaction of public affairs

<sup>1</sup> See “ Two Vice-Presidents,” in the *Century Magazine*, July, 1895, by Henry L. Dawes, member of the House from Massachusetts from 1857 to 1873, and senator from 1875 to 1891.



that he wielded when he was in sympathy with the Democracy. He advocated precisely the same principles he had advocated since he entered Congress, — economy and honesty in the transaction of public business, the national idea of government, and the liberty of the individual as exemplified in the right of the people of the free States and territories to exclude slavery from their homes. These creeds were the basis of the pure Jeffersonian Democracy as enunciated and practiced by its illustrious author. Mr. Hamlin did not change his principles one whit, — he was even then, and for years afterwards, a believer in the low-tariff idea; in fact, he used to say wittily: "I did not leave the Democracy; it was the Democracy that left me." But now with this brief analysis of Mr. Hamlin's position in the Senate, the narrative returns to the striking incidents in his life at this juncture.<sup>1</sup>

The slave party even grudged the Republicans their fair representation on the congressional committees, and the Senate was promptly organized in its interests. Mr. Hamlin's status among his Republican colleagues was established by their act in choosing him as their candidate for president *pro tempore* of the Senate, on account of his knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and he received his party's vote. But Benjamin Fitzpatrick was elected. The probable formation of the Senate committees was announced in March, when there was a protest made by Mr. Hamlin, Mr. Fessenden, Mr. Chandler, and other Republicans, at the unfair allotments of positions. When the Senate was organized in December, it was found that this protest had been unheeded, and Mr. Hamlin, on behalf of the Northern senators, made a rather sharp speech on December 16, charging the majority with having given an "unjust, disproportionate, and sectional cast" to the committees. He called attention to the fact that while it was conceded that the majority party had a right to control the business of the Senate, yet the principal committees were all in the hands of the South, and the business needs and rights of some of the largest Northern States were unrepresented. The proportion was thirteen committees for the South, and six for the North, although it had more representatives in the Senate than the South. This was to enable the South to establish the policy of the country at home and abroad, and it was a "fact pregnant with mischief." "The executive and judicial departments are now at the foot of the slave power."

<sup>1</sup> The limitations of space forbid even a summary of various legislative measures which Mr. Hamlin conducted, or interested himself in, during this period. One, however, must be mentioned. This was the movement to provide settlers in the West with land. Mr. Hamlin always favored the principle involved. The pro-slavery party opposed it, and President Buchanan vetoed a homestead bill. Mr. Hamlin opposed one bill on account of stock-jobbing features, but always favored the principle of the plan. See *New York Tribune*, September 19, 1860.

Mr. Hamlin could not enter into a discussion of personal details, but it is worth while recording that Mason and Slidell, the subsequent Confederate ambassadors to England, were at the head of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, while Seward was at the foot. Jefferson Davis, the coming president of the Confederacy, was chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, and he was flanked by other worthies who sympathized with him, one being Iverson, of Georgia, who was one of his major-generals; Henry Wilson and Preston King were at the foot of this body. Stephen R. Mallory, secretary of the Confederate navy, was chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs; John P. Hale was at the tail end. James A. Bayard, of Delaware, was at the head of the Judiciary Committee, with Pugh, of Ohio, a man of the same kind, and Toombs and others supporting him, while Collamer and Trumbull, the ablest constitutional lawyers in the Senate, were at the foot. Clement C. Clay, Jr., of Alabama, the whimsical statesman who used to obstruct the business of the Committee on Commerce, was now elected chairman, and Mr. Hamlin degraded to the last place. The Northern interests that were ignored cannot be briefly summarized. A few may be specified. The great Northwest, with its immense lake and river system, as Mr. Hamlin pointed out, had no representative on the Committee on Commerce. The Committee on Patents was largely dominated by the South, though, as Mr. Hamlin said, four fifths, if not nine tenths of American inventive genius and enterprise came from the North. But this palpable outrage was carried out by a strict party vote.

This was plainly a step the slave party took to get the Senate completely in its clutches in order that it might legislate the peculiar institution into Kansas as soon as possible. The necessary preliminary measures had already been taken by the pro-slavery allies in the territory. The legislature the Border Ruffians had set up by force and fraud called a convention at Lecompton, which drew up a constitution with a trap in it. The people were not permitted to vote for or against this constitution, but their action was restricted to voting whether they would accept the constitution with or without slavery. The trap was that if they voted against the slavery clause, there was a provision, on which they were not allowed to vote, that prohibited the exclusion of slavery from Kansas until 1864. Naturally the Free-Soilers refused to take notice of this act by the fraudulent legislature; action on their part would have given an apparent sanction to the existence of that bogus body. They did not vote, but the Border Ruffians did, and in some instances thousands more ballots were returned than there were inhabitants. Though this fraud was as plain as daylight, the complaisant Buchanan defended the Lecompton constitution, and in his message to Congress charged the people of

Kansas who had refused to vote on it with being in rebellion! Mr. Hamlin had taken the right measure of this man.

Of what avail now was Mr. Buchanan's assertion that "the slavery troubles were over"? He was mistrusted equally with his party that had prated of the "finality" of the compromise measures of 1850, and yet had broken down the Missouri Compromise. Benton, the last of the Jackson Romans, who had voted for Buchanan, now repudiated him, and with almost his dying breath sustained the Republicans in their opposition to the President.<sup>1</sup> Even Douglas revolted, and the doctrine of squatter sovereignty was but a mere ghost in the theatre of political action. Thousands of Democrats refused to accept this monstrous test of party fealty, and joined the Republicans. Yet, in spite of this protest against the Lecompton outrage, the reckless slave party continued in its mad effort to force the Lecompton constitution through Congress. The speeches of the pro-slavery leaders flamed with disunion sentiments. At this juncture Senator James H. Hammond and Mr. Hamlin engaged in a notable discussion. Mr. Hammond was a courteous and highly educated man, who sincerely believed that slavery was a blessing, and his speech was convincing proof that the rulers of the South, the slaveholders, were now coming to the conviction that their section must sooner or later separate itself from the North. Mr. Hammond spoke with authority; he was himself one of the largest slaveholders in the country. This is the historical significance of the speech, though at the time it gave the author the name of "Mudsill" Hammond, which arose from a peculiar use he made of this word, for which he said he intended to employ "manual hireling" in describing the free laborer.

Senator Hammond<sup>2</sup> attempted to prove that the South had a civilization superior to that of the North, and asserted that slavery gave to the South the "best frame of society enjoyed by any people on the face of the earth." Without openly advocating separation, he maintained that the South could stand alone, because it could present a larger army of "men on horseback with guns" than any other power, and because "cotton was king." If cotton was not furnished for three years, "England would topple headlong and drag all the civilized world, except the South, with her." To justify the South's feelings in favor of a separation, he declared that the North had broken faith with it, while the South had remained unchanged, and he asked what guarantee did the South have that the North would not "rob the South with a tariff," "bankrupt it with internal improvements and

<sup>1</sup> One of Benton's last political acts was to draw up resolutions denouncing the Dred Scott decision. This he gave to Francis P. Blair, Jr., with instructions to have Mr. Hamlin, for one, push them in the Senate.

<sup>2</sup> *Congressional Globe*, March 4, 1858, pp. 959-962.



fishery bounties," "create a new national bank," and "concentrate the finances at the North." But the wildest assertion Mr. Hammond made was that the Northern free laborers were virtually slaves, "hired for the day, and not taken care of, and scantily compensated." They were the class who performed the drudgery of life, "the very mudsills of society and political government, and you might as well undertake to build a house in the air as to build one or the other except on this mudsill. . . . Your slaves are white. They are your equals in natural endowments of intellect."

Mr. Hamlin's reply extended over the larger part of two days, on March 9 and 10. It was not a studied effort, but a conscientious presentation of facts. Yet it is interesting because it was a characteristic speech in several respects, besides being a valuable array of statistics. It was a good illustration of Senator Hamlin's peculiar ability to present the truth by grouping facts and fiction in sharp contrast. It had also some quaint and original home-thrusts, which gave it a unique flavor. While it was not one of Mr. Hamlin's best forensic efforts, it was a worthy demonstration of his large and practical knowledge of the business, commercial, industrial, political, and educational interests of the country. Henry Wilson, who was in the Senate, and a listener, wrote: "With patient research and careful collation of facts, Mr. Hamlin demonstrated the fallacies of Mr. Hammond's argument for the alleged greater prosperity of the Southern slave States, from the relative amounts of Southern and Northern exports, by showing from facts and figures that in all the elements of substantial prosperity, the free States were far in advance of the slave States, and that the advance was becoming greater and more apparent every year."<sup>1</sup>

In denouncing the Lecompton constitution, Senator Hamlin uttered this interesting prophecy: "Who that believes that nations, like individuals, must answer to a Higher Power for the wrongs they perpetrate, — who that believes that the sins committed by a nation are to be answered for as the sins of an individual, — can doubt that if the present course of things be persisted in, a fearful retribution must follow?" Proceeding to his theme, Mr. Hamlin said the facts of history showed that the faith of the South had not been kept, while "no single instance has been cited in which the North has violated its constitutional obligations." But it was the South that had changed and broken faith. "Who were the authors of the tariff policy? Read the messages of Thomas Jefferson, of James Madison; the language of Mr. Calhoun; . . . it was the South that tendered its aid to the North in establishing a protective policy. . . . The North should not again fasten a national bank on the South." "That policy, too,

<sup>1</sup> *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, vol. ii. p. 550.

came from the distinguished senator from South Carolina " (Calhoun). "When the Constitution was framed it was expected that the institution of slavery would fade away." "We had the maxims and the teachings of Jefferson and all the wisest and best statesmen of the South against slavery. . . . How stands the South to-day? She has repudiated the doctrines of her fathers, and comes here asserting that our government is founded on the principles of human servitude. Who have kept their faith?"

The Missouri Compromise was conceived by the South, and passed by the South with the help of some Northern votes. But "who abrogated this restriction? . . . After the South had secured under that compromise all the advantage that could accrue to her and her peculiar institutions, she comes into this hall, and she asks, she demands, and she obtains a repeal of all that was beneficial to the North. We are told by the senator from South Carolina that we can rely upon the South, that her plighted faith has never been broken!" But it was not alone in a party aspect that the South violated the time-honored compact. "Search all the records of your country, examine all the messages that have ever been presented to us, and not one can be found where an executive has undertaken to foreshadow the opinions of the judiciary, until you come to the inaugural address of the present President of the United States." The court decided that the colored man had no rights that the white man was bound to respect. "Modern Democracy claims that a majority of free white men in your territories have no rights that it is bound to respect. This is the doctrine of progress, as my friend (Mr. Durkee) says. But it is the kind of progress a boy made going to school. He arrived late, and excused himself by saying that every step he took forward he slipped back two. 'How did you get to school?' he was asked. 'Why,' he replied, 'I turned around and went backwards.'"

The North had more beggary than the South and took less care of its poor! This challenge invited another contrast between the free North and the slave South, and it was answered out of the mouths of Southern statisticians, who deplored the fact that slavery enlisted all the capital and enterprise of the South at a consequence of killing her manufacturing possibilities and interests and creating the "poor white trash." William Gregg, of South Carolina, regretted this state of affairs, and estimated that there were one hundred and twenty-five thousand poor whites in South Carolina who were "wholly neglected, and were suffered to while away an existence in a state but one step in advance of the Indian of the forest." Senator Hammond himself, in a speech in 1850, before the South Carolina Institute, described the poor whites of the South as obtaining a "precarious subsistence by occasional jobs, by hunting, by fishing, by plundering fields or folds,

... by trading with slaves." De Bow, of Louisiana, a recognized authority of national reputation, advocated the establishment of manufactures in the South "to raise this class from want and beggary and too frequently moral degradation," and characterized the poor whites as, "by association, a reduction of the white servant to the level of their colored fellow-menials."

The Northern laborers manual hirelings and virtually slaves! "Who are the manual laborers of the North that are degraded and placed by the slaves of the South by the senator of South Carolina? Sir, in all classes of our community are manual laborers. . . . They constitute, I affirm, a majority of our community — those who labor for compensation. I do not know, I confess I cannot understand, that distinction which allows a man to make a contract for the services of his brain, but denies him the right to make a contract for the services of his hands. There is no distinction whatever between them. We draw none; we make none. . . . Who are our 'hireling manual laborers of the North'? Sir, I can tell the senator that they are not the mudsills of our community. They are the men who clear away our forests. They are the men who make the green hillside blossom. They are the men who build our ships and who navigate them. They are the men who build our towns and who inhabit them. They are the men who constitute the great mass of our community. Sir, they are not only the pillars that support our government, but they are the capitals that adorn the very pillars. They are not to be classed with slaves! . . . They do our legislation at home. They support the State. They are the State. They are men, high-minded men. They read; they watch you in these halls every day. . . . I affirm that the great portion of our laborers at the North own their homes, and . . . they read; they are intelligent. . . . They are the pillars of the State, the State itself, and the very ornaments that adorn the columns."

The assertion that the South was more productive led to a presentation of official figures that made that claim ridiculous, and then Senator Hamlin closed his speech with an earnest appeal to the Senate to reject the Lecompton constitution, on the ground that it had been rejected by the people of Kansas. He said: "We ought, at the mere suggestion of wrong to these people, to go to the very basis and ascertain whether we are about to perpetrate a wrong, and force upon them a government which is not their own. But, sir, instead of that we are here day after day with petty juggling and pettifoggery, claiming to proceed under the forms of the law. Forms of the law! God knows that there is nothing but form in it. Forms of law! Long ago the mother country undertook to oppress the colonies by forms of law, but not as unjustly as we have ruled the people of Kansas; and she persecuted that great and noble patriot, John Hampden, under the



forms of the law and for his love of liberty. . . . In all history, save the crucifixion of Christ, there is no act that will stand upon the record of its pages of equal turpitude with this. The purpose of it is to extend human slavery."

But the slave power would not listen to reason. Though Douglas, backed by thousands of Northern Democrats, had broken away in the Senate, and a dozen Democrats in the House had defied the party whip, yet the slave party could not see the writing on the wall. It drove the Lecompton constitution through the Senate by a vote of 33 to 25, but was beaten in the House. It was cunning enough now to talk once more of compromise, and a characteristic compromise was offered. This was devised by William H. English, of Indiana. In plain words it was a vulgar attempt to bribe the people of Kansas to accept a pro-slavery constitution. The English bill submitted the Lecompton constitution to a popular vote, and made a handsome grant of land to Kansas if her people adopted the Lecompton fraud. If they did not, they could not have the land, and Congress would postpone the admission of Kansas into the Union as a State. This was forced through Congress—so low had that body fallen; but Kansas would not give up the battle she had fought so valiantly for the rights of her free people, and, in spite of the Border Ruffians, rejected the Lecompton constitution and the English swindle by more than 10,000 votes. And now Kansas was free and the cause of Free Soil strengthened. On the other hand, the disappointment of the slave power was twofold. It had fought the Mexican war, and had repealed the Missouri Compromise in vain.<sup>1</sup> Sullen and angered, it waited the movement of events.

<sup>1</sup> When the slave party deposed Douglas from the chairmanship of the Committee on Territories, Senator Hamlin wrote his brother Elijah on December 13, 1858: "I think the party leaders mean to kill him, and I hope they will. We want nothing to do with him."



LINCOLN AND HAMLIN.





## CHAPTER XXVII

### LINCOLN AND HAMLIN

THE logical outcome of Mr. Hamlin's brilliant victory in Maine in the campaign of 1856 was the consideration of his name in connection with both the presidency and the vice-presidency, in the discussion of the available candidates that preceded the Republican convention of 1860, and his nomination for Vice-President. To quote Thomas B. Reed, "This campaign made him Vice-President, and might have made him President." While it was the undoubted fact that Mr. Hamlin did not desire the presidency or the vice-presidency, nevertheless the logic of events, precedent, and party custom placed him in the line of succession for either of these offices, and he was swept into the vice-presidency, though against his wishes. The student of American political history need not be told that the governorship of a great State has often proved to be the stepping-stone to one of the two highest offices in the land. George Clinton, Daniel D. Tompkins, and Martin Van Buren, of New York, owed their elevation to the vice-presidency in no small measure to their election to the governorship of the Empire State. Mr. Polk's spirited contest in Tennessee, and dramatic victory in a gubernatorial campaign in that State, were factors that contributed to raise him to the presidency. In later years, Hayes and Cleveland were indebted for their advancement to the executive chair to the same process of selection, while McKinley's availability was strengthened by the notable popularity he revealed when he was elected and reelected governor of Ohio. But these illustrations will suffice to show how the course of events was responsible for Mr. Hamlin's nomination for Vice-President in 1860.

In studying the political situation prior to the Republican presidential convention of 1860, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that the consideration of availability was the chief factor in shaping its final action. General Fremont had declined to allow his name to go before the convention, and this, it was thought, would leave a clear field for Senator Seward, who was then the recognized leader of the party. But although Mr. Seward was favored by a majority of the party, he was strongly opposed by a minority, chiefly because it was feared that he could not be elected on account of the antagonism to him among the Know-Nothing elements that were supposed to

control the doubtful States of Pennsylvania and Illinois. Mr. Hamlin shared this fear, and although he always entertained very cordial relations with the distinguished senator from New York, he favored the nomination of another man. At the same time, many of the Republican politicians and newspapers in Maine, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, who questioned Mr. Seward's availability, began seriously to consider Mr. Hamlin's qualifications for the presidency, and to urge him to become a candidate. But this was against his wishes, and the movement did not fairly come before the public, although the presidential makers were aware of it, and some newspapers talked of it. The incident, however, is of sufficient interest to detail; it probably had some effect on the convention of 1860.

Few men ever reached the presidency without causing or allowing their friends to organize a movement in their behalf. Mr. Hamlin's supporters proposed to follow the usual methods, and in pursuance of this they began to circulate newspaper articles and his anti-slavery speeches throughout the country. It was the opinion of shrewd political observers of the day that few speeches ever had more influence on public action in the United States, in the shaping of political events in a critical period, than Mr. Hamlin's renunciation of the Democracy. It was also regarded as a striking exposition of the character, ability, and individuality of the man. It was disseminated broadcast throughout the country as campaign material, both in 1856 and 1860; and it reappeared again and again in the public prints throughout the rest of his life. Another interesting argument in his behalf was an article that appeared in the "St. Louis Globe-Democrat" (then the "Missouri Democrat"), in October, 1858, which was at that time the most powerful Republican organ in the Southwest. The circumstances of the publication of the article in question are as follows: A Republican politician of considerable activity, who was traveling in Maine in the fall of 1858, visited Hampden to see Mr. Hamlin, whom he had known at Washington. On reaching Hampden, he was struck with surprise to find a man he regarded as one of the strongest leaders in the Senate working on a farm, among the regular hands, and enjoying himself with keen zest. He was so impressed with this glimpse of Mr. Hamlin, in his home life, that he wrote an interesting account, which fell into the hands of the "St. Louis Globe-Democrat," although it was not intended for publication. He described Senator Hamlin's home as a "plain and comfortable residence," and his land as a "fine little farm of only ten acres of tillage land." He said that Mr. Hamlin told him that he "raised enough produce to supply his table," and that "for ten years he had always had corn left over to sell from ten to twenty bushels." He

gave other details regarding Senator Hamlin's home life, which altogether furnished a Coriolanus-like picture. The "St. Louis Globe-Democrat" published this letter, with an editorial comment that was republished at the time by journals which were scanning the horizon for the appearance of an available candidate against Seward. The editorial was as follows:—

"One of the first men of this nation is Senator Hamlin, of Maine. We do not mean that he has those gifts of brilliancy which attract upon the instant, nor those demonstrative qualities of a contentious spirit which make men the idols of excited crowds, but that in calmness and manliness, in solidity of character, in truth of speech, in firmness of resolve, he has few equals among distinguished statesmen of to-day. From the time of Jackson until now he has maintained the rigid inflexibility of his faith, careless of party defections and neglectful of party rewards, yet with the courage to lead on in critical conjunction, or to stand aloof and alone when factions become demoralized with victory. Taught early that Democracy meant freedom and not slavery, he has never swerved from that teaching; but in all his relations has ever allied himself with the radical element in politics which represents both control by the people and liberty to the people.

"In his domestic life he is above reproach and of singular simplicity of habit, going from the senate chamber to the harvest fields, or from the toils of a small farm to the cares of a great State, with the ease, dignity, and cheerfulness that mark the man devoted to duty before pleasure and conscious of acting his true part in life. Of late we have seen going the rounds of the partisan press a series of letters from Washington, telling how grandly and gorgeously some of our wealthy representatives have entertained the diplomatists and strangers at the federal capital, and dealing in what we must believe to be very exaggerated accounts of their munificence. To rival the White House in splendor is now the highest ambition of many there, and when we recall the plunder of the public treasury in which they have participated, the only wonder is that they succeeded so poorly. It is in contrast with such—with the Douglasses, the Gwins, the Brights, who ape the poor pretensions of aristocratic ways—that we wish to present a picture of this truly Republican senator as seen in his own home."

In other allusions to Mr. Hamlin, in connection with the presidential ticket of 1860, the newspaper press that was favorable to him drew attention to the contrast in ability, character, and experience he presented to Presidents Tyler, Polk, Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan, and to Douglas, Breckinridge, and other men the Democracy was discussing as presidential possibilities. But this will suffice, without going further into details, to show the drift of sentiment while the canvass was in process of discussion. Mr. Hamlin did not take it seriously, because he did not desire either the presidency or the vice-



presidency. When members of his family learned that leaders were writing him, urging him to become a candidate for President, he simply acknowledged the fact and added that he made no replies. He kept no records of the men who wrote him, and never of his own accord alluded to the incident. His conduct, on the whole, would seem incomprehensible to presidential seekers, and possibly reprehensible in view of the opportunity that was thus presented to him. While it is not within the limits of speculation to calculate the effect Mr. Hamlin might have had on the convention as a candidate with an organized movement at his back, it is of interest to recall the strength the various minor aspirants revealed. On the first ballot, Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, received 50½ votes; Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio, 49; Edward Bates, of Missouri, 48; William L. Dayton, of New Jersey, 14; John McLean, of Ohio, 12; and Jacob Colamer, of Vermont, 10. New England had no candidate, but divided her eighty odd votes among the various contestants. It had been proposed to bring Mr. Hamlin forward as the New England candidate. When it is borne in mind that the presidential lightning had unexpectedly struck such men as Polk and Pierce, it will be seen that Mr. Hamlin's friends were not without substantial grounds for reasoning that he might concentrate the anti-Seward elements on himself. But he preferred another man, and in the end threw his influence to Abraham Lincoln. This was one cause of the perfect friendship that always existed between them.

Six months before the Republican National Convention met at Chicago, Mr. Hamlin became convinced that the talk connecting his name with the presidency was more than a complimentary expression of opinion, and that unless he broke his silence there would be an organized movement to place him before the convention. The initiative was likely to be taken by the same cohorts who fought his battles against the slave power in Maine. Their desire was to pledge Maine to Mr. Hamlin in their state convention when delegates at large were to be chosen to the national convention. This would set the ball rolling, and carry undecided delegates from other States to Mr. Hamlin. But in placing a man on the presidential track, as the politicians say, it is first necessary to have his consent, although, it may be conceded, this is not usually difficult to obtain. Mr. Hamlin was the notable exception, and he again proved the sincerity of his declaration that he would rather be senator than President, by stopping all proceedings in his behalf at this juncture. Josiah H. Drummond, who was speaker of the House of Representatives of Maine the year before, informed Mr. Hamlin by letter that his consent was all that was wanting to place him before the national convention as Maine's choice for President. This was a formal declaration that Mr. Hamlin

could not ignore, and he promptly replied from Washington, on December 16, declining to encourage the movement in his favor, and outlining his ideas of the situation.

He said that he was aware of the fact that "sundry newspapers in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin had named him" for the presidency, and also acknowledged the receipt of "sundry letters from leading men in these States and New York to the same effect." But he had "no aspirations for the presidency," and believed that it was the duty of the Republican party to make success its watchword and to "rise above personal considerations." He added that if Maine wanted a candidate it might be a good plan to present Senator Fessenden, and he "would have a delegation from Maine who would concur in it." But this was in the event of a contingency that would give the nomination to a man who was not a candidate, and might "come up from the outside." If his own name should be forced on the convention he would naturally desire the concurrence of his own State. But he had "no hope or desire for such a result."

The striking passages may be quoted :—

"Seward is our prominent man, and I would, indeed, be glad to see him elected. I am his friend, but more the friend of the cause. I do not believe it will be wise to nominate him. We can elect another, while we might fail with him. . . . I have a settled conviction in my mind that the wisest thing we can do will be to nominate Judge Read, of Pennsylvania, for President, and Bates, of St. Louis, for Vice. Read is an able man, and was an old Democrat. [Bates was a Whig.] He can carry Pennsylvania with a rush. He united and consolidated the Republicans and Americans in that State last year, and was elected justice of the Supreme Court by a large majority. These men having united cordially for him once will do so easily again. These are my present views.

"My advice would be to elect a delegation from Maine of our *best men* and to be for no one, but be ready to coöperate in what is best when they meet in convention."

This reference to John Meredith Read, who was then chief justice of Pennsylvania, gives an insight into the plans that men in the inner councils of the Republican party were considering at this stage of the presidential canvass. It shows how largely the consideration of availability governed their deliberations at every stage of the nominating campaign. At one time the selection of Judge Read appeared to be one of the possibilities, and although his name was not formally presented to the convention, the incident is of sufficient interest to detail. In 1856 Buchanan carried Pennsylvania by only a little more than fourteen hundred votes over Fremont, and it was claimed that he won his victory through his double-face attitude on the Kansas question and the frauds of his party. But it is probable that that

interesting factor in American politics called state pride saved the day for Buchanan. In 1857 David Wilmot, the Republican candidate for governor, was badly defeated, probably on account of his free-trade ideas, and the party was greatly discouraged. In 1858 the situation was changed by Read's election to the chief justiceship by more than thirty thousand majority. It was then inevitable that Judge Read, with his great learning as a jurist, ample experience in public affairs, high character, and attractive personality, should be considered in connection with the presidency. Then, again, Judge Read was peculiarly qualified for the nomination in the eyes of Messrs. Hamlin, Wilmot, and others of the old Democracy. He was also a former Jackson Democrat and an anti-slavery man. President Polk nominated him for the Supreme Bench, and his convictions prevented his confirmation, — which was a testimonial to him.

The Read movement was doomed to failure, but it was once of promising dimensions and had the support of many strong men. Those who are familiar with the peculiarities of American politics know how a wave of sentiment moves in the direction of a man, and then suddenly recedes, leaving him on the shoal of defeat. Simon Cameron changed the current that was sweeping towards Judge Read. He was the "boss" of Pennsylvania politics, and had presidential aspirations himself. One of the surviving veterans of this interesting contest is E. Reed Myer, who was Wilmot's confidential associate and also Mr. Hamlin's personal friend. He has also long been prominent in the Republican party of his State, having been a member of both branches of the legislature, speaker of the House in 1877-78, and the surveyor of the port of Philadelphia from 1860 to 1866, when with Mr. Hamlin and others he resigned, refusing to hold office under President Johnson. From Towanda, Mr. Myer wrote<sup>1</sup> that Cameron claimed that he could carry a larger Know-Nothing vote in Pennsylvania than Judge Read, since he had affiliated with that party. Cameron had the power and carried the day, though Mr. Myer was of the opinion that the support he received was not sincere. This was one reason why the Pennsylvania delegation went over to Lincoln on the second ballot. One last appeal in the delegation to vote for Read was made by George T. Thom and other leading citizens of Philadelphia, and this was that Senator Hamlin would bring the support of the Eastern States. An anomaly was the fact that the Read plan finally included the nomination of Lincoln for Vice-President.

The rise of Abraham Lincoln was the interesting personal event of this political period. His appearance on the scene of action was not due to the chance of fortune or to the acts of any set of men. He was the man of the hour because he fulfilled the peculiar requirements

<sup>1</sup> To the author.



of the emergency, and he was the architect of his own fortunes. His comparative failure in Congress served only to strengthen his ambition and desire to succeed. He was conscious of his superior ability, however modest he may have been, and was not then without hope of a great future, though his ambitions did not seem to reach higher than the vice-presidency when he began to rise to distinction in the Northwest. He tried to shape his career just as a broad-gauged, sagacious, and shrewd politician would and should. He was a practical politician in the best sense of the word, and he owed his advancement to his familiarity with practical politics and politicians. He became chairman of the Whig party in Illinois, and when the Republican party was formed, his unique personality, perfect honesty, peculiar ability, love of truth, and tender sympathies for mankind were so well known that almost by one voice he was called to the head of the new organization in his State. All that was wanting to bring Mr. Lincoln before the nation was the opportunity to make himself heard, and this came when Douglas was a candidate for reelection to the Senate in 1858.

Mr. Lincoln was again called on by his party to lead in this emergency, and the debates with Douglas that followed placed him before the country, and indeed the world, as a statesman with views and purposes which were in touch with the enlightened spirit of the age, and a singularly felicitous power of making a great truth clear in a few words, or one original phrase, to the average mind. No public discussion between two statesmen, with the exception of the debates between Webster and Calhoun, exerted as much effect on the American people as the forensic contest between Lincoln and Douglas. There is indeed a parallel. The philosophical estimate that might be placed on the real value of Calhoun's career is the fact that it was he who served to rouse Webster to his mightiest efforts in expounding the national ideas of our government. In the same way, the chief value of Douglas's career was the fact that he served to stir Lincoln to his utmost, and bring out from him his best thoughts. Calhoun created the doctrine of nullification out of which came the idea of secession. Douglas built up the almost equally pernicious doctrine of squatter sovereignty which helped bring on the war. Webster's replies to Hayne and Calhoun "had the force of a constitutional amendment." In his replies to Douglas, Lincoln supplemented Webster, and while Calhoun and Douglas, like "Henry of France, marched up the hill and down again," the works of Webster and Lincoln are perpetuated forever because they are imbedded in the Constitution of this republic.

While Mr. Lincoln was not immediately talked of for the presidency outside of Illinois, as a result of his debates with Douglas his words fell on fallow soil. He produced a deep and lasting effect on

the masses of the North, and the politicians were persistently asked, "Who is this Lincoln and what is he like?" His speeches not only helped clear away the atmosphere of doubt that hung over the movement of political events, but also interested the public in his personality. The Northern masses intuitively recognized a true friend in this new champion, and wanted to learn all they could about him. The effect, then, of Mr. Lincoln's debates with Senator Douglas was to win him a national reputation, and place him before his party as a presidential possibility. Yet among the Eastern opponents of Mr. Seward there was uncertainty whether Mr. Lincoln was worthy of his reputation, and was equal to the great responsibilities of the presidency. His prominence caused the Democratic pro-slavery newspapers to make attacks on him. One favorite trick they had of misrepresenting Mr. Lincoln was to jeer at him as a "peripatetic lecturer" and "backwoods humorist." But this only shows the force of his exposures of the iniquities of the pro-slavery party. After the defeat of Judge Read, when the anti-Seward men were looking around for a new man, the New York opponents of Mr. Seward decided to invite Mr. Lincoln to address them in New York city, at Cooper Union, on February 27, 1860, to judge for themselves of his fitness for the presidency.

This was Mr. Lincoln's supreme opportunity, and he rose to the emergency. Horace Greeley testified in the "Tribune" that "no man has spoken to a larger assemblage of the intellectual and mental culture of our city." The occasion was under the auspices of leading men like William Cullen Bryant, ex-Governor John A. King, David Dudley Field, Cephas Brainard, James W. Nye, James A. Briggs, Charles C. Nott, Hiram Barney, — whom Mr. Lincoln appointed collector of the port of New York, — and others active in political affairs. While they were anxious to find the Moses who could lead them at this juncture, their attitude was necessarily critical and searching at first. But whatever barriers there might have been that natural prudence, caution, and conservatism erected, they were soon overcome by the speaker and forgotten in the glow of satisfaction he created. Although slavery was a well worn subject in all its aspects to the auditors, they soon found that Mr. Lincoln was reinvesting it with a new interest, and that he was treating the political problem with the authority of a statesman. His unique personality, too, took on a new appearance, and the dignity with which he bore himself, the ease with which he delivered his argument, unconsciously dispelled any preconceived notions the auditors might have acquired through the caricatures of the Democratic press. They felt that they were in contact with a great and searching mind and a strong and well balanced individuality. The argument was cold and solid logic, an irrefutable proof

that the founders of the government both favored the restriction of slavery and opposed its extension. Confidence in Mr. Lincoln's ability as a statesman and his qualities as a man was established. His victory was unique, and without parallel judged by its results: it won him the presidency of the United States.

Mr. Hamlin followed the Lincoln and Douglas debates with keen interest, and with the defeat of the Read movement began to consider the possibilities of Mr. Lincoln in connection with the presidential nomination. He consulted with members of the Illinois congressional delegation who knew Mr. Lincoln well, — particularly Elihu B. Washburne and Senator Douglas. Mr. Washburne's opinions always had great weight with Mr. Hamlin, and his views of Mr. Lincoln pleased him. Senator Douglas never failed to speak fairly and frankly of Mr. Lincoln to those of his personal friends among the Republican congressmen who asked him about his Illinois rival. To Mr. Hamlin and others he said that Mr. Lincoln was an honest, able man, and the one whom he disliked above all to meet in debate. It was the better Douglas who spoke, and his just tribute to Mr. Lincoln could not but result in strengthening the good impressions the latter had already made on the leaders of his party. The Cooper Union speech, which was the convincing argument in favor of Mr. Lincoln, now had the effect of setting Mr. Hamlin quietly at work to secure delegates for this new champion from the giant young West.

One of the interesting phases of the political situation was the existence of a little jealousy between the two principal elements that composed the Republican party. Indeed, it was hardly to be expected that after men had fought each other for many years as Whigs and Democrats, they could be expected to sink all feelings of distrust in a political association of only four years' existence. In passing, it should be added by way of parenthesis that not a few of Mr. Hamlin's old friends, who were desirous of obtaining a continuation of his support, would remind him, even many years after the formation of the Republican party, that they had "always been Andrew Jackson Democrats," while their opponents had "always been Federalists of the stiffest kind." In Maine there was not a little friction of this kind, and great tact had to be exercised in reconciling differences that arose from this. Senator Fessenden was the accepted leader of the former Whigs, and Senator Hamlin of the former Democrats. Any movement against Mr. Seward in Maine was likely to arouse the animosities and jealousies of his former Whig admirers. Mr. Hamlin had therefore to proceed with great caution.

The line of action which he pursued was in accordance with his ideas regarding the rights of others and the duty of the occasion. He did not wish to go counter to the wishes of his party, but he was



so strongly convinced of Mr. Seward's weakness that he could not remain silent. He would not resort to the arbitrary methods of the "boss" to defeat the Seward men, but he was not disposed to allow them to pledge the Maine delegation to the New York leader. He conceived a policy in the end that was one of the most interesting and characteristic illustrations we have of his knowledge of men and politics, as will appear later. In the beginning he quietly defined his position to his intimate friends, and allowed it to be known to Governor Seward. This is mentioned because an impression once prevailed that Mr. Hamlin was favorable to Seward. There was no warrant for this. There was no feeling between Mr. Seward and his Maine associate on that account, and their intercourse was as friendly as ever. Mr. Hamlin candidly expressed his fears that Mr. Seward could not carry the doubtful States which controlled the result. Thus there was no unnecessary antagonism caused among the Maine Republicans when they prepared to choose four delegates at large to the Chicago convention, and indicate their preference for President.

This was left to the representatives of the party in the legislature. In this body Mr. Hamlin had a large number of personal friends and followers, who were guided by his advice in all matters of party importance. Among the senators were Josiah H. Drummond, of Waterville; Joseph Barron, of Topsham; Henry Kennedy, of Waldoboro; Amos B. Simpson, of Sullivan; John Bridges, of Castine; Joseph M. Livermore, of Eastport; John Thissell, of Corinth; Jabez True, of Bangor; William C. Hammatt, of Howland, and Phineas Tolman, of Rockland. In the House were William H. Rounds, of Danville; John B. Jones, of Lewiston; Newell A. Foster, of Portland; Frederick Webber, of Castine; Daniel M. Perkins, of Penobscot; James R. Bachelder, of Readfield; Everett W. Stetson, of Damariscotta; Timothy Williams, of Rockland; James W. Clark, of Andover; John P. Hubbard, of Hiram; Alvah Black, of Paris; E. W. Woodbury, of Sweden; Benjamin Y. Tuell, of Sumner; George K. Jewett, of Bangor; John B. Nickels, of Corinth; Samuel H. Chesley, of Chester; Winthrop Chapman, of Exeter; Luther N. Jones, of Holden; Amos Pickard, of Hampden; Joseph P. Sinclair, of Levant; Benjamin B. Thomas, of Newburgh; John Benson, of Newport; Samuel Wiswell, of Orrington; Richard M. Woodman, of Old Town; Ira D. Fish, of Patten; Moses W. Brown, of Brownville; A. K. P. Gray, of Dover; Charles Loring, of Guilford; T. J. Small, of Wellington; Reuben A. Rich, of Frankfort; Joseph W. Thompson, of Stockton; Raymond S. Rich, of Thorndike; Stephen Dyer, of Unity; Samuel C. Hamilton, of Biddeford; Ephraim C. Spinney, of Kittery, and others who were well known in their day.

When it came time for the Republican legislature caucus to act,

Mr. Hamlin's friends and others shared his opinion, and the caucus passed a resolution declaring that it was best not to instruct the delegates, but to allow them to go to Chicago and vote for the candidates who in their judgment could be elected. This was offered by James G. Blaine, who was then a member of the Maine House, and was rapidly coming to the front. The preference of the caucus was unmistakably for Mr. Seward, because it chose four delegates at large who were known to be in his favor. But Mr. Hamlin made no contest on this point. He believed that if representative men were sent to Chicago, they would speedily see for themselves that the logic of the situation would dictate the selection of a man other than Seward. The adoption of the resolution was a moral victory, and Mr. Hamlin attached importance to it. The Seward men believed at first that New England would generally support him as the Eastern candidate; but the action of the Maine Republicans, in refusing to instruct their delegates for him, was evidence that the New York senator was not so strong in that section of the country as they had supposed that he was. Those who are versed in the peculiarities of practical politics know how a little straw like this may produce important results that upset the best laid plans.

The action of the legislative caucus had the effect of restraining the Seward men throughout Maine from pledging delegates to their favorite candidate when the conventions were held in the various congressional districts, and the general disposition was to allow the delegates to act according to their judgment. But in one district, which was then the second and now a part of the third, the Seward men made a determined effort to choose one of their number, Colonel John N. Swazey, a leading citizen of Bucksport and a man of influence in his party. When this move was reported to Senator Hamlin, he exerted himself to head off the Seward men. He instructed his son Charles, who was beginning the practice of law at Orland, to concentrate the anti-Seward strength on some representative Republican who would go to Chicago unpledged. Mr. Hamlin conferred with leading men in Hancock County who were his father's friends, with the result that Captain John West, of Franklin, was selected as their candidate. He had leanings towards Lincoln, and he was chosen also because he was a cool and reliable politician, and would be governed wholly by practical considerations in the Chicago convention. There was a sharp fight, and Captain West was elected by a small majority.

There were sixteen delegates elected from Maine, and although they were unpledged, yet if Mr. Hamlin had not taken further action, it is probable that all but one or two would have voted for Mr. Seward in obedience to the strong sentiment in his favor that existed

in Maine. Mr. Hamlin now counted on his personal influence, and also on the sense of the convention, to open the eyes of the delegates to Mr. Seward's weakness. General Samuel F. Hersey, of Bangor, and Mark F. Wentworth, of Kittery, were two delegates who had long followed Mr. Hamlin and were among his closest friends. He emphasized to them his fears that Mr. Seward could not be elected, and at the same time frankly expressed his doubts whether Seward was the right man for the presidency at this juncture, even if he could be elected. He felt that the presidency required peculiar qualities, and that Mr. Seward's brilliant ability and personal characteristics would win him a loftier eminence in the Senate than in the White House. This was not derogatory to Mr. Seward; it was in accordance with the ideas Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Benton discussed in regard to other candidates for the presidency in 1852. General Hersey and Mr. Wentworth accepted Mr. Hamlin's judgment, and now, counting Captain West, there were three delegates who would be governed by the sense of the convention. The question then arose how to influence more, and that is another story.

When the Maine delegation started for Chicago, General Hersey and other members called on Senator Hamlin, at Washington, to consult further with him about their course in the convention. While Mr. Seward's nomination at this time appeared reasonably certain, there was sufficient doubt in the minds of Mr. Hamlin's friends to make it advisable, in their opinion, to groom him as the "dark horse," as the politicians say. This subject came up once more, and Mr. Hamlin thought to end it forever by emphatically forbidding the presentation of his name in connection with either place on the ticket. He went farther, on seeing that his friends were disappointed, and exacted from them a promise that they would not vote for him in case his name happened to be brought before the convention. This, he supposed, precluded all possibility of his nomination, and he then turned to the course before the Maine delegates. He gave them some characteristic advice, which was substantially as follows:—

"Appoint one of your members to canvass the delegates from the three doubtful States of Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois. Have him obtain from them in writing the names of three men who can carry these States."

The Republican delegates gathered at Chicago on May 16 under auspicious conditions. The party was united and enthusiastic. Party success was cordially desired, and Victory was the watchword. Young America predominated. The attendance was immense. Chicago was electric with excitement. The great wigwam was an arena of stirring scenes. The note of the hour was confidence. All felt that the



day of the Republican party had come. The final harbinger of success was the radical division in the Democracy, which had apparently resulted from the struggle between the followers of Douglas and Breckinridge to nominate their respective leaders for President at the Baltimore convention. The secession scheme of the slave power, which was the bottom cause of the split, had not yet come to the surface. The quarrel, therefore, served to give the situation a rosy tint to the ardent Republicans, and to enliven the contest over the ticket to be nominated. But the party was young and comparatively free from factional jealousies. Few presidential conventions have been conducted with more cordiality and less bitterness. The opponents of Seward, with but few exceptions, freely recognized the debt the party owed to him, and gave testimonial to his high character and splendid ability. But they feared he could not be elected. The business of the opponents of Mr. Seward was to procure his defeat without causing party strife. This was done, and the country long ago learned that the credit of this belonged to the friends of Abraham Lincoln.

The story of the convention need not be told again in detail or the scene painted anew. The moral and intellectual character of the assemblage was indicated by the presence of many men who afterwards attained national distinction as congressmen or governors, and also of others who were already national figures, — Joshua R. Giddings, John A. Andrew, Horace Greeley, George William Curtis, George S. Boutwell, Andrew G. Curtin, Thurlow Weed, William M. Evarts, Francis P. Blair, Jr., B. Gratz Brown, Henry S. Lane, Carl Schurz, Edwin D. Morgan, Preston King, David K. Cartter, and many more. It was fitting that the Wilmot Proviso should be the first plank of the party that was now to go out to its first national success. George Ashmun, of Massachusetts, the permanent chairman, had a happy faculty of keeping a great crowd in good spirits and humor without sacrificing dignity or losing a point. The platform adopted, the convention prepared to ballot for candidates for President. The following names were presented without speeches: William H. Seward, of New York; Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois; Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania; Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio; Edward Bates, of Missouri; William L. Dayton, of New Jersey; John McLean, of Ohio; and Jacob Collamer, of Vermont. The first ballot was taken, and the result awaited with great excitement. But before it is announced a little incident behind the scenes demands attention.

Mr. Lincoln's nomination was due to necessity; it was not accomplished by any set of men. He was the one man on whom the convention could compromise in the belief that he could carry the doubtful States. The delegates realized this after they came to real-

ize the situation. They found it out in various ways. The undercurrent of sentiment that turned in the direction of Mr. Lincoln in the opening days of the convention drew into it many hesitating delegates who thus contributed to his nomination. This incident is therefore related merely to show the natural drift of affairs, not to claim any undue credit for Senator Hamlin for bringing delegates over to Mr. Lincoln. General Hersey and Mr. Wentworth followed his advice, and made a private canvass of the men who represented the three great doubtful States. A minority of the delegates thus interrogated replied in their own handwriting that Mr. Seward could, while a large number contradicted this; but the majority of delegates from these States declared that Lincoln could carry them. This result was convincing to three more delegates from Maine, — George W. Lawrence, of Warren, Leonard Andrews, of Biddeford, and Rensselaer Cram, of Portland. When the first ballot was announced, the Seward men were surprised and probably discouraged to learn that Maine, who spoke first, gave their leader only ten votes instead of sixteen, while the Lincoln men were elated to hear that the Pine Tree State threw six votes for their favorite. This was but a straw, but it was one of the many that changed the course of events at Chicago in May, 1860.

Mr. Lincoln was nominated on the third ballot, and then after a brief recess the convention proceeded to choose the candidate for Vice-President. The consideration of availability also governed the convention in making this selection. Mr. Lincoln being a Western man, the advisability of taking an Eastern or border state man for his colleague was obvious. The evidence shows that Mr. Hamlin was in the minds of many men for a place on the ticket, and that the movement in his favor for Vice-President was spontaneous in nature, and was developed by the practical element in the convention. Attention was called to Mr. Hamlin's long service in Congress, his anti-slavery career, his popularity in New England, his leadership in founding the Republican party, and his recognized standing as a parliamentarian, which peculiarly fitted him to preside over the Senate. The more radical wing in the convention desired Cassius M. Clay, whose splendid battle in Kentucky against slavery had made his name a household word. John Hickman, of Pennsylvania, a former anti-Nebraska Democrat, had some following. There was also some talk about Nathaniel P. Banks, of Massachusetts, Andrew H. Reeder, of Pennsylvania, Henry Winter Davis, of Maryland, and others. But the tide of sentiment turned so strongly in Mr. Hamlin's favor that only Clay was a serious competitor, and his following held together for but one ballot. There were, however, some incidents that entered into the general results, and should be presented.

When Senator Hamlin's friends in the Maine delegation reached

Chicago, and ascertained that there was a strong feeling in favor of placing him on the ticket, they concluded that the circumstances of the situation absolved them from their pledges to Mr. Hamlin. They knew him, and understood that he meant what he said, but the emergency that now confronted them naturally had more weight with them than personal considerations. The movement for Mr. Hamlin for Vice-President was spontaneous, and they could not stop it. On the other hand, there was a strong sentiment for Clay, and as Mr. Hamlin's name was bound to go before the convention, his personal friends were determined that he should not suffer the mortification of a defeat through lack of organization. With this object in view General Hersey and other friends of Mr. Hamlin canvassed the situation. The action that turned the scale in his favor was that taken by the New York delegation. This included Preston King and other associates and personal friends of Mr. Hamlin in Congress, who were among the prime movers in his behalf. The fact that the New York men with but few exceptions knew of Mr. Hamlin's opposition to Mr. Seward, and yet favored him for Vice-President, is another proof of the unselfish spirit of the occasion. David K. Cartter, of Ohio, presented Mr. Hamlin's name, and on the first ballot he received 194 to 101½ for Clay, 58 for Hickman, 51 for Reeder, 38½ for Banks, and a scattering for others. On the second he received 367, and was nominated.<sup>1</sup>

Senator Hamlin was totally unprepared for the action of the convention, and his nomination was perhaps the greatest surprise he received during his political career. The day the ticket was to be named he wrote a letter to his wife, who was in Bangor, from which it appeared that his thoughts were chiefly on domestic affairs. He referred to the probable course of the convention in these few words: "To-day I presume Seward will be nominated at Chicago. If so we must make the best of it, though I am sure a much wiser nomination could be made." This was the prevailing impression. Horace Greeley, who was opposed to Mr. Seward, telegraphed the "Tribune"

<sup>1</sup> The vote in detail was: First ballot. Hamlin: Maine 16, New Hampshire 10, Vermont 10, Massachusetts 1, Rhode Island 8, Connecticut 5, New York 35, New Jersey 6, Pennsylvania 11, Maryland 8, Delaware 2, Ohio 46, Indiana 8, Michigan 8, Illinois 2, Wisconsin 5, Iowa 6, Minnesota 6, Oregon 1; total 194. Clay: Connecticut 3, New York 9, New Jersey 1, Pennsylvania 4½, Indiana 2, Delaware 3, Virginia 23, Kentucky 23, Maryland 18, Michigan 4, Illinois 2, Wisconsin 5, Minnesota 1, Nebraska 1, and the District of Columbia 2; total 101½. Hickman: Massachusetts 1, Connecticut 2, New York 11, Maryland 1, Pennsylvania 7, Delaware 1, Missouri 9, Illinois 2, California 8, Minnesota 1, Oregon 3, Kansas 6, and Nebraska 5; total 58. On the second ballot, Massachusetts withdrew Banks, and cast 26 for Hamlin; Pennsylvania withdrew Reeder, and threw 54 for Hamlin, and New York 70. The nomination was made unanimous.



the night before that Seward's nomination was sure. The news of Lincoln's selection was therefore all the more gratifying to Mr. Hamlin from a party point of view,—for he personally liked Mr. Seward very much. He was in a pleasant frame of mind over the outlook, and prepared to enjoy the evening at a pleasant game of cards with some of his senatorial companions in his rooms at the Washington House. About nine o'clock a tumult of men cheering and rushing into the hotel was heard. Upstairs they poured, and presently they were in the entry, pounding at Mr. Hamlin's door. He arose in a hurry, not suspecting what the matter was, and opened the door. There stood Colfax, Chandler, Wade, Bingham, Foot, Washburne, and many other old friends. Up went their hands in a military salute:—

"Good-evening, Mr. Vice-President," was the chorus Mr. Hamlin heard.

"What do you mean?" he asked in amazement.

"You have been nominated for Vice-President," was the reply.

"But I don't want the place," he ejaculated.

"Look here, Hamlin," interposed Ben Wade, as he thrust himself forward, "if you decline, the Democrats will think that you are afraid to run, and your fear will be taken as auguring our defeat."

"That is so, that is so," chorused the others.

"What!" said Mr. Hamlin, "they might think I was afraid to run on a Republican ticket?"

"Yes, Hamlin, just that," replied Wade.

"Well, now, I shall, and be damned to them," Senator Hamlin blurted out, excited and amused over this turn of fortune.

This conversation took place in less time than it takes to read it, and when it was over, a great crowd of men, who had not heard it, were pressing into Mr. Hamlin's room, eager to congratulate him. He entered into the spirit of the movement so cordially that his friends were all enthusiasm, and the fright they had received was forgotten for the nonce, to be recalled later as an amusing illustration of the old Carthaginian's frankness and bluntness. They understood, of course, that he impulsively expressed his disinclination for the vice-presidency, but that he was too faithful a man to evade his party's call and shirk his duty. There was no more worriment on this score, and that was the end of the affair and all there was to it, although elaborated accounts give another impression.

In the mean time, the news had circulated around the city, and soon a great crowd gathered before the Washington House, clamorous for a sight of the candidate. Washington was a Seward city, and his defeat depressed the Republicans there. Senator Dawes, who was present on this occasion as a representative from Massachusetts, wrote of the

incident: "The nomination of Mr. Hamlin for Vice-President came to him unsought and unexpected. We at Washington had no other thought but that Mr. Seward would head the ticket, and that Mr. Lincoln, or some other Western man, would be selected for the second place. Our hearts were broken with disappointment. The news of Mr. Lincoln's nomination reached Washington in the afternoon, that of Mr. Hamlin's late in the evening. The intermediate time was spent in nursing our anger. But when the nomination of Mr. Hamlin was announced, a stormy multitude stormed his hotel, and forced him out on the balcony. The night was gloomy, and the crowd was more so. But his first sentence, 'What is one man in this crisis?' lifted the cloud and let in the light. Before he had ceased we were ready to lay aside our idol and pledge our loyalty to a new leader."

Senator Hamlin wrote his wife the following characteristic letter:—

"I have just received your letter of the 16th. You are a dear wife to write me so often, for it does me good, when I am here alone, to hear from you. It was my intention to have written you quite fully to-day, but I cannot do it as I have much on my hands, and you must excuse me.

"Well, dear, I presume you were as much astonished as myself at my nomination for Vice-President. I was amazed at it. I neither expected nor desired it. But it has been made, and as a man faithful to the cause, it leaves me no alternative but to accept it.

"The first news I had was between nine and ten o'clock Friday evening, when I heard a great rush of men in the passage outside my room. The door was suddenly opened and the room filled with men, Mr. Colfax, of the House, with a dispatch in his hand, announcing the result. There was a wonderful excitement over it until about one o'clock.

"Last evening our house was brilliantly illuminated, and I made a very short speech to the crowd that gathered to serenade me. I will send it to you. The ladies all regretted that you were not here. So did I. I send you several papers, so that you may see what is said."

The action of the Chicago convention was a great surprise to the country, but was well received by the Republican party. As it is the special province of this volume to deal with Mr. Hamlin's career, it is proper to reproduce some of the comments his nomination evoked from the press, that a more comprehensive idea may be gained of his standing before the country at this time. One comment of interest is from the "New York Evening Post," which was one of the original Republican newspapers, and was still under the guidance of William Cullen Bryant. This was in part as follows:—

"It is written on the tablets of destiny that Lincoln is to be the next President of the United States. The name which is associated with that of Lincoln is a worthy and honored one. Mr. Hamlin, of Maine, has long been a member of Congress, — first the House of Representatives, and then

of the Senate, and in both capacities has represented his State with ability and dignity. His name has never been connected with any dishonorable measure, and the record of his public life is one that will bear being spread open to the gaze of the public from its first page to its last. His parliamentary experience will make him a prompt and skillful moderator of the debates of the Senate, and his long familiarity with public affairs will make him a wise and safe adviser in the Cabinet. We congratulate the country that the future President is likely to have a coadjutor of so high a character and such eminent capacity."

Brief extracts may be quoted from numerous newspapers published in the various sections of the country.

The "New York Tribune" said: "Mr. Hamlin is a man of dignified presence, of solid abilities, of unflinching integrity, and great executive talent. . . . The name of Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, is a fit second to that of Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois." The "Detroit Daily Advertiser:" "The nomination of Hannibal Hamlin is eminently fit as the second, or rather comrade, of the gallant Lincoln. He would have honored the place to which Lincoln himself has been nominated." The "Boston Traveler:" "Mr. Hamlin has always held a high place in the Senate, and probably there is no man in the country who has a better acquaintance with its great interests or who has labored more industriously or intelligently for their advancements." The "Worcester Spy:" "The candidate for Vice-President is not inferior to him (Lincoln) in whatever qualities are worthy of the respect and confidence of his fellow-countrymen." The "Utica (N. Y.) Morning Herald:" "Senator Hamlin is a statesman of tried worth and distinguished eminence." The "Syracuse (N. Y.) Standard:" "His official and private record contains no spot or blemish." The "Rochester (N. Y.) Democrat:" "His name will add great strength to the ticket in New England." The "Newark (N. J.) Mercury:" "No truer representative of the fundamental ideas of our organization can be found anywhere. . . . His name will prove a tower of strength in the contest now inaugurated." The "Bangor (Me.) Whig and Courier:" "It will fill the hearts of the people with pride and pleasure to know that our own Hamlin, whose name and fame are as familiar to us as household words, is nominated for Vice-President."<sup>1</sup>

The views of the honorable opposition were expressed by the "Baltimore Patriot," a leading Bell and Everett newspaper of Maryland, in the following editorial:—

"Mr. Hamlin was always a Democrat until the repeal of the Missouri Compromise came up, when he denounced it as an offense against plighted faith, and in open Senate dissolved his connection with the Democratic party and went over to the Republicans. As a legislator his record shows him to be the author of more laws than any of his compeers for the same length of time. He was and is the special friend of commerce. No man of

<sup>1</sup> These are specimen extracts taken from scores that were published.



any party questions his high integrity of character, and his sound and solid judgment has always made him a safe lawgiver. Had Mr. Fremont been elected in the contest of 1856, it is understood that Mr. Hamlin would have been his secretary of the treasury. On the slavery question he was always what the Democrats used to consider sound before the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Of the rights of the States he is an unqualified defender."

The estimates that some of Mr. Hamlin's colleagues and other public men placed on him are interesting. Salmon P. Chase said, in part, at a Republican mass meeting at Columbus, Ohio, on May 22: "Of the nominee for Vice-President I can say that he is truly worthy of the confidence reposed in him. I have served with him long in public life, and have known him well. He has been a lifelong Democrat — not of the modern type, but of the school of Jefferson and Franklin. His Democracy is not of the kind which consists in subserviency to the dictates of a slaveholding class, and whose highest manifestation is the alacrity with which its devotees will chase a runaway nigger, but that Democracy upon which our institutions are based. . . . I can pronounce no higher eulogium on him than to say that he is worthy of association upon the same ticket with Abraham Lincoln." Horace Greeley said at a Republican ratification in New York city, on May 22: "I know Mr. Hamlin, our candidate for Vice-President. He is a very unassuming, mild-mannered, but a very able man. . . . Both of these men, Lincoln and Hamlin, have polled the highest vote ever polled in their two several States." Charles Sumner spoke at the Republican ratification meeting at Cooper Union, July 11, and paid this tribute: "Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, whose clear head, firm principles, and ample experience none who sat with him in the Senate can contest." On May 29, Ben Wade said at a ratification meeting in Washington: "No superior in wisdom and integrity to Hannibal Hamlin can be found."

The Maine Republicans had expected that Mr. Seward would be nominated, and were disappointed at the news that Mr. Lincoln had been placed at the head of the ticket. But when they heard that Senator Hamlin had been taken for Vice-President there was great enthusiasm all over the State, and crowds cheered and bonfires burned late into the next morning. The following letter from Elijah L. Hamlin, the senator's brother, is a volume in itself. It told how the nominations were received in Bangor:—

"DEAR BROTHER, — On Friday afternoon, the nomination of Mr. Lincoln for President was announced here. About four o'clock, one hundred guns were fired, and in the evening a large bonfire was made in West Market Square. The band of music was on hand, and the inhabitants of the city and adjacent towns filled the streets. During the evening a dispatch

was received from Belfast, stating that Banks was nominated for Vice-President, and was pretty generally believed. The whole affair passed off very well, although the Republicans were generally somewhat disappointed at the result, their preference being for Seward.

"About twelve o'clock I was awakened by a crowd about my house shouting your nomination for Vice-President. Augustus<sup>1</sup> and I had to get up, and upon opening the door, the outsiders rushed into the house with loud cheers. After partaking of some refreshments, Augustus found a swivel and some powder, and a salute was fired in honor of the nomination.

"There was a call for some wadding for the gun. John Wingate tore off a piece of his pantaloons for wadding and continued to furnish wadding in the same way, and when the firing was over he had nothing left of his pantaloons but the waistbands. When the firing commenced in the afternoon, Wingate was fishing on your old grounds beyond Eddington. Upon hearing the first gun, he says, he gave such a jump and shout for the Republican nomination that he broke his watch crystal all to smash, and he produced the watch to show it. He immediately started for home, having some ways to come on foot, and in his hurry he damaged his pantaloons badly. He came into the city about twelve o'clock, at about the same time of the news of your nomination, and he said he would make a burnt offering of his pantaloons, and so had them fired off in wadding the gun. Wingate's performance has made a good deal of fun, and he says he is ready to be fired off himself if he could only kill the Democratic party.

"Two drums were obtained, and the crowd then went to the mayor's, Hollis Bowman, then to Wingate's, the street commissioner, and so on to other places until near sunrise. The nomination was everywhere enthusiastically received, and in some cases, persons came out just as they came out of bed. The Democrats complain that they had no sleep the last part of the night, there was such an infernal uproar in the streets.

"There is to be a demonstration made in Hampden this afternoon, and I and others intend going down.

"The nomination takes well. The Democrats are sulky. Some have been heard to say that it will be of no use to oppose the ticket.

"I would congratulate you on the nomination, for whether elected or not, it is highly complimentary to you and our State."

Another characteristic and interesting note was from the senator's sister, Mrs. Vesta Holmes, of Calais, Maine. She wrote in part:—

"I have been thinking that it would be highly proper for me to write you a line upon this uncommonly interesting occasion, but whether it should be one of congratulation or condolence, it is not easy to decide. Do you remember old Pat Carey, who used to live in Paris, when we were children, and the story he used to tell of having his fortune told when he was a young man?—that in his old age he was to ride in his carriage, on the doors of which was to be the motto, 'Who'd have thought it'? Now it seems to me if you should ever arrive at the honor of being Vice-President

<sup>1</sup> His son, Dr. Augustus C. Hamlin.

the same motto might not be inappropriate. When I first heard of the nomination I could not believe it, it took me so by surprise. But when I heard bells ringing, guns firing, and men shouting, I took it for a fact. It is common to hear people complain of the ingratitude of the world for services rendered, but it will hardly apply to you, for what Shakespeare says about there being 'a tide in the affairs of men' seems to be fulfilled in you. You shall have my best wishes for your success, and a vote if I had one."

On May 30 Mr. Hamlin made public his letter of acceptance, which was as follows :—

"GENTLEMEN, — Your official communication of the 18th inst., informing me that the representatives of the Republican party of the United States, assembled at Chicago on that day, had by unanimous vote selected me as their candidate for the office of Vice-President of the United States, has been received, together with the resolutions adopted by the convention as its declaration of principles. These resolutions enunciate clearly and forcibly the principles which unite us, and the objects proposed to be accomplished. They address themselves to all, and there is neither necessity nor propriety in entering upon a discussion of any of them. They have the approval of my judgment, and in any action of mine will be faithfully and cordially sustained. I am profoundly grateful to those with whom it is my pride to coöperate for the nomination so unexpectedly conferred. And I desire to tender through you to the members of the convention my sincere thanks for the confidence thus reposed in me. Should the nomination which I now accept be ratified by the people, and the duties devolved on me of presiding over the Senate of the United States, it will be my earnest endeavor faithfully to discharge them with a just regard for the rights of all.

"It is to be observed in connection with the doings of the Republican convention, that the paramount object with us is to preserve the normal conditions of our territorial domains as homes for freemen. The able advocate and defender of Republican principles whom you have named for the highest place that can gratify the ambition of man comes from a State which has been made what it is by the special action in that respect by the wise and good men who founded our institutions. The rights of free labor have been there vindicated and maintained. The thrift and enterprise which so distinguish Illinois, one of the most flourishing States of the glorious West, we would see secured to all the territories of the Union, and restore peace and harmony to the whole country by bringing back the government to what it was under the wise and patriotic men who created it. If the Republicans shall succeed in that object, as they hope to, they will be held in grateful remembrance by the busy and teeming millions of the future ages.

I am, very truly yours,

"H. HAMLIN.

"To the HON. GEORGE ASHMUN,

"President of the Convention, and others of the Committee."



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### ELECTION OF LINCOLN AND HAMLIN

THERE were four tickets in the presidential campaign of 1860, and it is a significant circumstance that they represented all shades of convictions and attitudes on the slavery issue save abolition. This is to be borne in mind, in order to appreciate the extreme partisanship of the slaveholding oligarchy in trying to justify secession by claiming that the North waged war upon the institution of slavery. Lincoln and Hamlin were nominated on a platform that declared only against the extension of slavery into Northern soil, and which also recognized the rights of the individual States to manage their domestic affairs, — slavery being one in the South. Breckinridge and Lane, who represented the Southern Democracy, declared that slavery was a national institution, and that no power could prevent a slaveholder from taking his "property" wherever he pleased. The Northern Democracy, led by Douglas and Johnson, professed to believe that only the Supreme Court could decide whether slavery might exist in the territories, and therefore was the compromise party. The so-called Unionists presented Bell and Everett as their candidates, and, dodging the issue of slavery, pointed to the Constitution as their guide.

The official attitude of the Republican party was constitutional, republican, generous, frank, and consistent. That of the Democracy was unconstitutional, unrepublican, arrogant, and inconsistent. The position of the Unionists gained them the somewhat irreverent title of the Respectable Old Gentlemen's Party. The Republicans, however, were assailed as an unconstitutional, sectional, and unnational party. But was it unconstitutional for them to insist that *all* the States should have the right to regulate their own domestic affairs? Was this a sectional, an unrepublican policy? The Republicans simply insisted that the South should be allowed to regulate the affairs of slavery within its borders under the provisions of the Constitution; at the same time it demanded equal right for the Northern States to exclude slavery from their soil under the provision of the Constitution that gave them the same right to manage their own affairs. But, on the other hand, the pro-slavery Democracy, representing a minority people, insisted that they had a right to force a thing on a majority

people who did not want it. Was this in accordance with the constitutional principle that the majority shall rule? The Republicans maintained that the United States "was a nation," and that Congress could enforce the laws and must respect the rights of the States. The pro-slavery Democracy said that the United States "were a confederacy," that Congress had no right to legislate on slavery in the territories, and that the State had no right to do so. Which was the Republican, National, and State Rights party in the true sense of these terms?

The conduct of the Republican party throughout the campaign was consistent with its principles and pledges. It encouraged free speech and a fair ballot. Men who were already plotting against the life of the government spoke throughout the North, and were courteously received. The Breckinridge party was organized in every Northern State, and no attempt was made to disorganize it. Was there anything of an unconstitutional or sectional nature about this? On the other hand, the Republican party did not present an electoral ticket in the slaveholding States, only because its adherents there were threatened with violence if they should support the party. Worse than that, the lives of some Union men were taken to intimidate others. Incredible as it may seem now, there were slavery leaders who boasted of this in public. Proof is abundant. Only one incident may be cited. Thomas L. Clingman said, in the United States Senate at this period, "The senator from Texas told me the other day that a good many of those debaters (Republicans) were hanging up by the trees in that country." But this contrast between the parties of freedom and slavery has been carried far enough to show that the latter was the offender in the very things it charged against the former. Yet the strongest indictment against the Southern Democracy is the fact that it broke up its own party and originated this campaign of misrepresentation and abuse, to facilitate the secession movement that was now on foot at the South.

The Republicans entered on the campaign in the belief that Lincoln and Hamlin would be elected, and that the South would acquiesce. But before long the intense feeling at the South, which at first expressed itself in dividing the Democracy, took a more sinister meaning than a party factional quarrel, and a conviction grew at the North that the South did not intend to accept Mr. Lincoln's election. With slavery storming at the gates of the North since the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and now threatening to deny Mr. Lincoln as President, the feeling grew at the North that the final test had better come for supremacy between the two sections. The South hitherto, although the minority section of the country, had named every President, controlled the Supreme Court and Congress, and in the main

had dictated the policy of the government. The slaves had increased to four millions, and their salable value was alone estimated at two thousand millions of dollars. But they represented more than money; they were the basis of Southern political power, social prestige, and institutions. The Northern masses now saw the practical danger as well as the moral nature of the problem that confronted them. If slavery should be established among them, they would be reduced to the grade of serfs and the civilization of their country changed. So slavery was no longer a phantom of the politicians, but an ugly, threatening intruder that was now before them. It was to be stopped, and so the Northern masses began to flock to the standard of the Republican party.

The frightful storm of misrepresentation and abuse that was poured out on the Republican party and its standard-bearers by the secession leaders was what convinced the Northern people that there was a grave danger in the future. In no presidential campaign have a party and its nominees been so atrociously maligned and misrepresented as in that of 1860. The Republicans were denounced as "Black Republicans," "nigger worshipers," "fanatics," and "abolitionists." Lincoln and Hamlin were reviled in terms that seem incredible. One was called the "man ape" and a "Southern renegade;" the other, a "nigger" or "mulatto," and a "Democratic traitor." This, too, in spite of the fact that the honorable political opponents of each man had testified to his character, ability, and antecedents. But it was a part of a scheme to "fire the Southern heart," in order to prepare the Southern people for the secession movement that was to be started after the election. This is an unpleasant subject, and might be overlooked out of charity to the mistaken people who were led to believe these lies by unscrupulous conspirators, who took this course to deceive them into the gigantic mistake of the age. But there were circumstances connected with the defamation of Mr. Hamlin that make it necessary to fix the responsibility. R. Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, was the author of this miserable business. The following extract from a speech he made at Charleston, on July 9, 1860, is an instructive example of the means employed to "fire the hearts of the South:"—

"If the Black Republicans," said Rhett, "succeed in electing Lincoln and Hamlin, who openly advocate that slavery be abolished throughout the whole world, then we have to look to ourselves. Hamlin is what we call a mulatto. He has black blood in him, and let me tell you that it is his nomination that has a remarkable peculiarity. The Northern people take that man in consequence of his peculiarity. I see it stated in the papers that he is a mulatto. I can only say that some state it as a reason why that man is taken up, in consequence of the spite and malignity manifested



towards us. But they design to place over the South a man who has negro blood in his veins. They put a renegade Southron on one side for President, and they put a man of colored blood on the other side of the ticket for Vice-President, of the United States. This was a sectional convention. They nominated men upon a sectional principle, with not a single Southern State represented among them. They proposed a platform of principles utterly inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, by which their rules should be governed."

Mr. Hamlin's swarthy complexion furnished the pretext for coining this miserable falsehood, and Rhett's responsibility in standing as sponsor for the lie made him more culpable than the ignorant inventor. He had sat in the House and the Senate with Mr. Hamlin, and could see at a glance that there was nothing in Mr. Hamlin's physiognomy that betrayed the presence of African blood. He had seen the cordial personal relations that had long existed between Mr. Hamlin and Davis, Cobb, Hunter, and many other Southerners of high social status. He had also seen many a man in Congress who was as dark as Mr. Hamlin and whose ancestry no one had dreamed of questioning. An amusing incident is peculiarly apropos. Mr. Hamlin and R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, bore a striking resemblance to each other, and Mr. Hunter was fully as swarthy as Mr. Hamlin. They were often taken for each other. On one occasion a ludicrous blunder was made. A pro-slavery scheme was before the Senate. Mr. Hamlin did not happen to be in his seat. Mr. Hunter, who was present, voted for it. A correspondent for a Northern newspaper thought that it was Mr. Hamlin who voted, and telegraphed his newspaper that "Hannibal Hamlin had supported a rank pro-slavery scheme." This sudden conversion of Mr. Hamlin into a pro-slavery man and Mr. Hunter into an anti-slavery man created roars of laughter in the Senate the next day, and the two were facetiously called the Senatorial Dromios by some of their mischievous colleagues. But no one called Mr. Hunter a "mulatto." He was a Democrat and a secessionist. When Mr. Hamlin was a Democrat he was known favorably among the Southern wing of his party as the "Old Carthaginian of Maine." But now that he was a Republican, he was transformed, through eyes colored by passion and prejudice, into a veritable African.

Rhett's speeches unfortunately had their effect on the Southern masses. They were spread broadcast throughout that section of the country by a raging press and infuriated stump orators, who were moving spirits in the conspiracy to take the South out of the Union. The slander was believed by thousands, although it was repeatedly exposed, and was not countenanced by Jefferson Davis, Hunter, Cobb, and other secession leaders, who knew its falsity and would not identify

themselves with such abominable tactics. It is easy to see how the thought that a "nigger" or a "mulatto" would be the next Vice-President could operate to enrage a people who were already in an excited frame of mind over the constant and inflammatory recitals of alleged wrongs done the South. The incident must therefore have its due weight acknowledged in balancing up the things that precipitated a terribly deceived people into a bloody war. It also exposes the nature of some of the men who were active in setting events moving to bring on secession. Rhett was of the baser kind of men, and the kind of man to do this kind of dirty things. Although he professed to pride himself on his "aristocratic lineage," his name, and connection with South Carolina, yet his right name was Smith, and he was born in North Carolina. It was his boast that he was the "Father of the Confederacy," yet when the leaders of that affair were measured by the crisis, Rhett found himself a prophet without honor in his country, and slunk into comparative obscurity.

The official tone of the Republican campaign, on the other hand, was moderate, considering the circumstances. Mr. Lincoln's admirable bearing and prudent utterances are familiar history, and need not be reviewed. Mr. Hamlin's course is now of peculiar interest. He made several speeches, and also took a very active, although inconspicuous, part in the Maine campaign, which was the opening gun in the great battle. His first speech was made at Washington, on May 30, before the Republican Association of that city, and was the official opening of the campaign at the national capital. Mr. Hamlin said, —

"Concurring fully with you in the great principles which have united us in political association, I am pleased to meet you on this occasion, and I unite my voice with you most cordially in a tribute to a common cause. You have assembled to congratulate each other upon the doings of our recent convention at Chicago. Of that position which has been assigned to me, you will allow me to say that, while I feel profoundly grateful for the honor it confers, and am duly sensible of the obligation it imposes, it was neither sought, expected, nor even desired. But as it has come unsolicited, it leaves me no alternative but to accept the responsibilities which attach to it, with an earnest hope that a cause more important than any man will receive no detriment at my hands.

"But you have come to pay a tribute to our standard-bearer, who has been taken from the great West, where the star of empire is culminating, — a man of comprehensive and vigorous intellect, and fully equal to the position assigned him. The architect of his own fortunes, he comes to us emphatically a representative man; not only a representative man and an able and earnest exponent of Republican principles, but also as identified with the laboring and industrial classes. Having from early life to the maturity of manhood devoted himself to physical labor, he can, as he does,



but feel a keener sense of the rights of labor. He stands before the country, too, with a high moral character upon which even a suspicion was never breathed, and with a political integrity above reproach. The objects desired by the Republicans in the pending election, and the obligations imposed on our candidate, are to bring back the government to the principles and practices of its fathers and founders, and to administer it in the light of their wisdom and example; to aid our commerce, to send it out upon distant seas, and to prepare for it havens in its distress and on its return; to infuse new life and energy into all the productive and industrial pursuits of the whole country. We must not forget that the prosperity of every country must repose upon productive industry. Labor it is, and labor alone, that builds and navigates our ships, delves in our mines, makes music in our workshops, clears away the forest, and makes the hillside blossom as the rose. It maintains our government and upholds the world in its prosperity and advancement. Surely, then, it should challenge and demand the rights of the government it thus sustains.

“To preserve the integrity of the Union, with the full and just rights of the States secured, — the States themselves not interfering with the principles of liberty and humanity in the territories, — and to save our original territorial domain for the homesteads of the free — there are the great principles for which we have united to sustain and advance. That done our government will remain a blessing to all, and our country a refuge in which the man of every creed and clime may enjoy the securities and privileges of institutions of freedom regulated only by law.”

In June Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine, where he had a royal welcome, and found the State in a blaze of Republican enthusiasm. The Republicans began the campaign well by nominating Israel Washburn, Jr., for governor. He was unquestionably the best man to lead the party. While he did not enjoy the larger fame that fell to the lot of his more distinguished brother, Elihu, he was nevertheless one of the strongest of the anti-slavery leaders of his time, and in the qualities of honesty, sincerity, courage, and public spirit he was a great man. He had served several terms in the House, where he took a high rank and obtained a national reputation. It is to Governor Washburn's credit, that right after the Missouri Compromise was repealed he promptly invited the anti-slavery members of Congress to his house, and suggested that a new political organization should be formed under the title of the Republican party. The invaluable services Washburn rendered to Maine and the Union, when he was the chief magistrate of the Pine Tree State, entitle him to rank with John A. Andrew and Oliver P. Morton, as one of the great war governors of the North. But other nominations in this contest were not so favorable to success, and as he was not to be misled by appearances, Mr. Hamlin resolved to familiarize himself with the situation, and see that the party was not taken off its guard, or deceived by over-confidence.



Mr. Hamlin accordingly visited several sections of the State, and at the same time made a few speeches which demand a little attention. In some remarks he made at Portland on June 26, he emphasized the importance of a good homestead law, the necessity of an adequate tariff, and the inconsistency of the slavery party on the Kansas question. But the most interesting occasion in this tour of inspection was a celebration at Mr. Hamlin's old home, Paris Hill, on July 10. The friends of his boyhood, and the people of Oxford County in general, took a natural pride in his success. To quote a contemporaneous writer, "There were five thousand people present, and as they poured up the hills it seemed as if the votaries of freedom were ascending the mountains of the Switzerland of New England to pledge themselves anew in the course of liberty." Mr. Hamlin addressed the audience on the green in front of his father's old home, standing under the noble elms that he, as a boy, had planted many years before. Mr. Washburn, Elijah L. Hamlin, Anson Burlingame, ex-Congressman Charles J. Gilman, R. K. Goodenow, a former boyhood friend of Mr. Hamlin, who had served with him in Congress, and General John J. Perry, another Oxford County friend, who had likewise gone with him to Washington, were the principal speakers. It is worthy of note that Stewart L. Woodford, later United States minister to Spain, on this occasion made one of his first speeches in Maine.

Mr. Hamlin evidently intended to speak chiefly of personal things. He alluded to the familiar scene before him that was hallowed with the recollections of his early days, and pointing to the glorious mountains, he began :—

"Liberty dwells among the hills and valleys of all countries, and true hearts are nurtured in such regions."

At this point an envious and bitter Hunker broke out :—

"If you are true why did you change?"

Mr. Hamlin turned on him, and retorted :—

"I learned my Democracy at the feet of the Sage of Monticello, where I learned that personal rights should be protected before those of property, and where I was taught that the Almighty had no attitude that could take sides with the slaveholder. He taught, too, that which every man who has a soul in him knows to be true, that forcing one man to be the slave of another is wrong in principle, — wrong in the United States, wrong everywhere. I have always been true to these principles, and I challenge any man to show to the contrary. I think I know the difference between party principle and party name, and from a sense of duty and right I go for principle. I cannot abandon principle if I would, and I would not if I could. Every man has the principle of liberty in him if it is not killed out by prejudice. That man before me cannot go to his home to-night, lay his

head upon his pillow, and reflect carefully on the right and wrong of the great questions of freedom and slavery, without feeling that there is a monitor here within, telling him that principle is before prejudice, and that he should follow right and principle instead of party and prejudice."

Another incident of personal interest and of an amusing nature was told around the State in the early stages of the campaign. An eccentric individual declared his intention of voting against Mr. Hamlin, though he had known him for years, and regarded him as a satisfactory senator. "I ain't going to vote for Hannibal Hamlin," he said, "because he and I went in swimming together when we wuz boys." He seemed to have the idea that a man who in his youth indulged in this essentially common pastime, thereby degraded himself and rendered himself unfit for the exalted office of Vice-President.

Mr. Hamlin soon became dissatisfied with the management of the campaign in Maine, and apprehensive of a smaller Republican majority than the party ought to command. To use a familiar expression, he found that the Republicans were "doing all the shouting," while the Democrats were "doing all the work." The latter, of course, had no expectations of carrying the State; they did hope, however, that they might take advantage of the over-confident feeling that existed among the Republicans and reduce Washburn's majority below the expected figure. For this reason Douglas was induced to make some speeches in Maine, and his presence seemed to arouse a considerable show of enthusiasm among his supporters in the State. Mr. Hamlin promptly called the managers of his party together, and in plain and emphatic speech showed them the necessity of making a closer and better systematized campaign. He also wrote some letters to national leaders, arousing them to the importance of lending their help to the campaign, to set it in vigorous motion. The Republicans then came down to hard work and fought with their eyes open. The result was the party acquitted itself with credit and was not caught off its guard as it was in the Garfield campaign twenty years later.

The picturesque feature of the campaign was the participation of the Wide Awakes, a uniformed army of Republicans who were numbered by tens of thousands, and were indeed a marching and singing host of great importance to the Republican cause. They imparted a breezy enthusiasm to the Republican masses, and their banners, devices, and songs struck a great popular chord. On their torches they carried American flags, which bore the pictures and names of Lincoln and Hamlin. Other devices included curious anagrams, to show that the names of Lincoln and Hamlin were forever associated. Thus:—

Abra/Hamlin/coln

or

Ham-Lin

Lin-cola

The songs are interesting reminiscences of these stirring times, and several are presented. The following verses were sung by a Lincoln and Hamlin Glee Club, at a ratification meeting in Cooper Union, at New York city, on June 7. They were more prophetic than they seemed.

## 1.

The war armies are beating,  
Prepare for the fight;  
The people are gathering  
In strength and in might.  
Fling out your broad banner  
Against the blue sky,  
With Lincoln and Hamlin  
We'll conquer or die.

## 2.

The clarion is sounding  
From inland to shore,  
Your sword and your lances  
Must slumber no more;  
The slave-driving millions,  
See how they fly!  
With Lincoln and Hamlin  
We'll conquer or die.

## 3.

March forth to the battle,  
All fearless and calm;  
The strength of your spirit  
Throw into your arm;  
With ballots for bullets,  
Let this be your cry,  
"With Lincoln and Hamlin  
We'll conquer or die."

"Lincoln and Hamlin! God bless them," was the title of another popular song, sung to the tune "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and was as follows:—

## 1.

There's a sound like the surges of ocean,  
Or winds sweeping forest and lea;  
It comes from a nation in motion—  
From the millions who've sworn to be free!  
There are thoughts, beyond words, which impress them,  
As they shout with enraptured applause,  
"Here's to Lincoln and Hamlin! God bless them!  
And bless, too, our country and cause!"

## CHORUS.

And bless, too, our country and cause!  
And bless, too, our country and cause!  
Here's to Lincoln and Hamlin! God bless them!  
And bless, too, our country and cause!



## 2.

Through the portals of death speak the sires,  
 Aroused from their haven of rest,  
 To kindle the slumbering fires,  
 Till they glow in each patriot's breast !  
 They stretch out their arms to caress them, —  
 Their children, who honor their laws, —  
 And cry, "Lincoln and Hamlin ! God bless them !  
 And bless, too, our country and cause !"

CHORUS : And bless, too, our country and cause, etc.

## 3.

The future speaks out with its voices,  
 And joins with the rest of all time,  
 As it smiles with delight and rejoices  
 At a scene more than grand — that 's sublime !  
 And vain is the hope to suppress them,  
 Or to stifle the shouts of applause,  
 Which cry, "Lincoln and Hamlin ! God bless them !  
 And bless, too, our country and cause !"

CHORUS : And bless, too, our country and cause, etc.

"God and the Right !" is the name of this song : —

## 1.

Hark ! hark ! over mountain, through forest and vale,  
 Borne along on the wings of the swift-rushing gale,  
 Comes the loud battle-cry of men in their might,  
 The watchword of freedom, — "God and the right !"  
     Raise your banners high,  
     Shout forth the battle-cry,  
 "Lincoln and Hamlin — God and the right !"

## 2.

From Atlantic's blue waves to the far peaceful ocean,  
 The gathering hosts of the free are in motion,  
 Marching steadily onward to join in the fight —  
 The glorious contest for God and the right !  
     Proudly their pennants fly,  
     Loud rings their battle-cry,  
 "Lincoln and Hamlin — God and the right !"

## 3.

From the field and the workshop the brave sons of toil,  
 With one common object, — Free men and free soil, —  
 With firm, steady hand, and with eye beaming bright,  
 Press onward to battle for God and the right !  
     Onward the victory,  
     List to their battle-cry,  
 "Lincoln and Hamlin — God and the right !"

## 4.

Hark ! through the night the long tocsin is sounding,  
 With bright, joyous hope each bosom is bounding ;

Soon on us will dawn the millennial light,  
 The glorious reign of God and the right!  
 Shout then for liberty,  
 Join in the battle-cry,  
 "Lincoln and Hamlin — God and the right!"

Some stray verses may be given. Here is one from a song sung at a great gathering at Erie, Pa., on September 12, under the title of "The Rising Tide:" —

They come, they come, a mighty throng,  
 From mountain and valley, with joyous song;  
 They sing of the fathers, who made us free,  
 Of Lincoln and Hamlin and Liberty.

Here is a verse from a poem by Mrs. L. L. Deming, entitled, "Give us Abe, and Hamlin, too:" —

Oh, hear ye not the wild huzzas  
 That come from every State,  
 For honest Uncle Abraham  
 The people's candidate?  
 He is our choice, our nominee,  
 A self-made man and true;  
 We'll show the Democrats this fall  
 What honest Abe can do.

CHORUS.

Then give us Abe, and Hamlin, too,  
 To guide our gallant ship;  
 With stalwart boys to man the decks,  
 We'll have a merry trip.

Mr. Hamlin's interest in the Wide Awakes was manifested in a characteristic manner, which threw more light on his perfect belief in democracy. He not only helped organize Wide Awake companies, but he also marched with them several times in Bangor and Portland, and once in Boston. This led the ignorant, unscrupulous, and supercilious to view him in the light of a demagogue. But they were mostly men who at banquets eulogized Jefferson and Jackson, and lauded the principle of democratic fraternization among the people, without observing their own precepts. Mr. Hamlin practiced what he preached, and with amusing inconsistency they called him a demagogue. But it should be added that, in after years, Mr. Hamlin's sincerity was almost universally recognized. When he was out of public life and could have had no possible ulterior motive, he continued to march with the old soldiers and the rank and file of his party, as he had when an unknown lawyer in Hampden. He came from a long line of ancestors who had fought in both the mother country and his own land for the rights of democracy. The truth is, Mr. Hamlin's

nature led him to mingle as freely with the plain people as a pastor does with his flock. He despised men who thought so little of the fundamental principles of their country as to prate about them and not practice them.

While Mr. Hamlin was occupied with the fight in Maine, Mr. Lincoln's thoughts turned eastward. The two had never met, although they had seen each other in Congress. On July 18 Mr. Lincoln wrote the following characteristic letter to his party associate :—

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, July 18, 1860.

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN :

*My dear Sir,*—It appears to me that you and I ought to be acquainted, and accordingly I write this as a sort of introduction of myself to you. You first entered the Senate during the single term I was a member of the House of Representatives, but I have no recollection that we were introduced. I shall be pleased to receive a line from you.

The prospect of Republican success now appears very flattering, so far as I can perceive. Do you see anything to the contrary?

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

On September 4 Mr. Lincoln again wrote :—

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN :

*My dear Sir,*—I am annoyed some by a letter from a friend in Chicago in which the following passage occurs : “Hamlin has written Colfax that two members of Congress will, he fears, be lost in Maine, — the first and sixth districts ; and that Washburn's majority for governor will not exceed six thousand.”

I had heard something like this six weeks ago, but had been answered since that it was not so. Your secretary of state, — Mr. Smith, I think, — whom you introduced to me by letter, gave this assurance ; more recently, Mr. Fessenden, our candidate for Congress in one of those districts, wrote a relative here that his election was sure by at least 5000, and that Washburn's majority would be from 14,000 to 17,000 ; and still later Mr. Fogg, of New Hampshire, now at New York serving on a national committee, wrote me that we were having a desperate fight in Maine which would end in a splendid victory for us.

Such a result as you seem to have predicted in Maine, in your letter to Colfax, would, I fear, put us on the down-hill track, lose us the state elections in Pennsylvania and Indiana, and probably ruin us on the main turn in November. You must not allow it.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.



But the trouble in Maine had been practically settled before Mr. Lincoln received his last advices, and the campaign was moving on to the finish with an ever-gathering force. Yet the circumstances justified Mr. Hamlin "speaking out in meeting," as it were, and an analysis of the vote in this election, together with a comparison of Republican majorities in previous and succeeding campaigns, will show that the Republican party did not get down to solid work any too soon. Mr. Hamlin would have liked to have Washburn elected by a plurality as decisive as that which he received in 1856, — 25,000. But a natural reaction followed this great victory, and in the three successive state campaigns Lot M. Morrill was chosen governor by pluralities ranging from 11,000 to 17,000. Mr. Hamlin maintained that if Mr. Washburn's plurality over his competitor fell below 17,000 it would be a moral defeat for the Republicans. As a matter of fact, Mr. Washburn received a few hundred votes more than this. All the Republican candidates for Congress were also elected, though several by smaller majorities. Fessenden, who expected 5000 majority, had 1200; John N. Wood, in the first district, had 1400. That district, by the way, was never regarded as surely Republican until the forceful personality of Thomas B. Reed made it a safe and secure Republican stronghold. Even in the middle of the war it was represented one term in Congress by a Democrat.

The uncertainty felt about the size of the Republican majority in Maine, as well as the success of the congressional ticket, is apparent from the comments made in the leading Republican newspapers. The "New York Tribune" said in part: —

"Hail, Maine! Maine did a noble day's work yesterday. We had feared that the fierce clamor of the adversary concerning Elder Peck's defalcation and other local issues, and the desperate exertions of the allied pro-slavery factions, would result in the loss of at least *one* of the Republican congressmen in the three close districts two years ago, and that the Republican majority for governor — 12,000, last year, when little effort was made and but a light vote polled — might be somewhat diminished. But we underestimated the strength, not the energy, of the compatriots of Hannibal Hamlin."

The "Boston Journal" said in part: —

"The Democracy have largely built their hopes upon Maine. There they were united. There Douglas had laid out the work and set the ball in motion. . . . Again the Republicans started the campaign rather apathetically. Their congressional nominees were nearly all new men, and other circumstances induced at first some misgivings as to the result."

"The news from Maine" had an inspiring effect throughout the country, and depressed the Douglas Democracy. Mr. Hamlin now

felt confident of national success for his party, though he believed that the victory should have been more decisive. It is within the bounds of propriety for the historian to remind the reader that Mr. Hamlin was not allowed by party custom to take the stump and make a circuit of the State. It was his presence at the meetings in the memorable fight of 1856 that added the final thousands of votes to his great victory that year. Thus a convincing measure was furnished of the strength of his personality with the masses of Maine. He was never beaten or disappointed but once in an appeal to them, and that was when he first ran for Congress in 1840. But under the circumstances Maine did well, and helped swell the tide of Republicanism that was rising at the North. The other fall state elections also show how the current was moving, and on November 6 the ballots of the freemen of the North executed their will, Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin were elected President and Vice-President of the United States respectively, and the momentous presidential campaign of 1860 passed into history, though it is a chapter preceding a greater contest.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### MR. LINCOLN AND MR. HAMLIN MEET

THE plot to withdraw the Southern States from the Union and merge them with Mexico and a part of South America into a vast slave empire, began to come rapidly to a head with the announcement of Mr. Lincoln's election to the presidency. The leaders in this gigantic scheme favored Republican success in the belief that it would help them "fire the heart of the Southern people." The news of Mr. Lincoln's election was therefore received with fierce exultation by the leaders of the slave power and its creatures. They now had their long-desired pretext for secession, — they claimed that Lincoln would be an unconstitutional President, because he had been elected by a minority party. But this was transparent sophistry. According to this reasoning, James Buchanan, the last tool of the slave power to occupy the executive chair, was an unconstitutional President, to mention no other Presidents who were chosen by a minority vote. But only a pretext was sought, and it verified the prophecy of Andrew Jackson, that the tariff having failed as a pretext to break up the Union, human slavery would be the next. South Carolina, the fountain-head of the doctrines of nullification and secession and extreme ideas of state rights, was the moving spirit. The day after Lincoln had been chosen the chief magistrate of the nation, the legislature, politicians, and newspapers of the Palmetto State began concerted action to take South Carolina out of the Union, and lead the way for Southern secession.

The news from Charleston had a disquieting effect on the North, although the feeling soon gained ground that it was mere Southern buncombe, and would end in talk. Just at this juncture, Senator Hamlin received the following letter from President-elect Lincoln:—

(Confidential.)

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, November 8, 1860.

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN:

*My dear Sir,* — I am anxious for a personal interview with you at as early a day as possible. Can you, without much inconvenience, meet me at Chicago? If you can, please name as early a day as you conveniently can, and telegraph me, unless there be sufficient time before the day named to communicate by mail.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.



Mr. Hamlin received this letter while at his home in Hampden. He had been more disturbed over the ferment in South Carolina than he cared to admit. He told his wife and a few close friends that he feared a serious conflict was impending. He did not predict war in so many words, but he did say to his wife : —

“ I know now that the Southern talk in Congress meant something. If they intend war, we will show them that we shall fight. We have been silent long enough.”

Thus it was with feelings of great anxiety that Mr. Hamlin met Mr. Lincoln on November 22. When he was shown into Mr. Lincoln's room at the Tremont House, he found the President-elect alone, waiting for him. He noticed then the traces of anxiety that were afterwards familiar on the kindly face of Mr. Lincoln. There was a slightly wearied air about him, as if he had been wrestling with some momentous problem. He arose, and walking to Mr. Hamlin, said in an abrupt way, though with a pleasant tone of voice : —

“ Have we ever been introduced to each other, Mr. Hamlin ? ”

“ No, sir ; I think not,” replied the Vice-President-elect.

“ That is also my impression,” said Lincoln ; “ but I remember distinctly, while I was in Congress, to have heard you make a speech in the Senate. I was very much struck with that speech, senator — particularly struck with it — and for the reason that it was filled ‘ chock up ’ with the very best kind of anti-slavery doctrine.”

“ Well, now,” replied Hamlin, laughing, “ that is very singular ; for my one and first recollection of yourself is of having heard you make a speech in the House, — a speech that was so full of good humor and sharp points that I, together with other of your auditors, was convulsed with laughter.<sup>1</sup> And I see that you and I remain in accord in our anti-slavery principles.”

Mr. Lincoln intended to consult with Mr. Hamlin about his Cabinet, but before they had made material progress, the news was bruited about that the President and Vice-President elect were together at the Tremont House, and a great throng of visitors was the result. An impromptu reception followed. The next day Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin made their escape to Lake View, where at the private house of Judge Ebenezer Peck, a friend of Lincoln, they held their interview. Mr. Lincoln, while apparently anxious to get to business, bore all these interruptions with great patience and kindness. After they were comfortably settled at Lake View, Mr. Lincoln's genial nature expanded, and he said in his kindly, sincere way : —

“ Mr. Hamlin, I desire to say to you that I shall accept, and shall always be willing to accept, in the very best spirit, any advice that you, the Vice-President, may give me.”

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*.

This was all the more pleasing to Mr. Hamlin, not only because it was totally unexpected, but also because it gave him his first personal insight into the heart and character of his great party associate. It was unprecedented, and in the unfolding of this many-sided man, the incident impressed Mr. Hamlin, when seeking the keynote to Mr. Lincoln's acts which at first puzzled him. An act so cordial and sincere could not fail to bring an equally cordial and sincere reply from one of a responsive nature, and Mr. Hamlin replied :—

"Mr. Lincoln, I desire to say to you that although the relations between the Vice-Presidents and the Presidents have not been friendly as a rule, with the exception of Van Buren and Jackson, I pledge myself to be your friend and to render you the best advice and assistance in my humble power."

Other writers have pointed out the similarity of traits and antecedents between these two men, and it is only necessary to say that the interview begun thus auspiciously was conducted and terminated very agreeably. Mr. Lincoln's attitude was most friendly, but while he never hesitated to express himself in quaint phrases, or crack a joke, Mr. Hamlin was impressed with his air of innate dignity and strength. Mr. Lincoln would evidently welcome frank advice, and with kindly tact, that was almost democracy itself, make his visitor at home, yet he would be the author of his acts, the master of the situation, and be controlled by his own judgment. This was speedily confirmed in Mr. Hamlin's mind when he approached the subject of the crisis in South Carolina. As this was the first meeting of Mr. Lincoln and his party colleague, he did not take Mr. Hamlin as fully into his confidence on this subject as he did later. He did not say anything that would commit him to a policy, and dismissed the incident in a general way, to turn to the business on which he had summoned Mr. Hamlin, — the Cabinet.

He developed to Mr. Hamlin his now well-known plan of forming a Cabinet to weld the followers of Seward, Chase, Cameron, and Bates — his rivals for the nomination — into a compact body by taking these leaders into his official household. He told Mr. Hamlin in so many words that he believed that the exigencies of the situation required him to do this, and then he discussed the various men who were being talked about, or were being pressed for positions in the Cabinet. Seward, Sumner, and Dayton were the most prominent men who were spoken of for secretary of state, and Mr. Lincoln at once indicated his belief that circumstances dictated the selection of Seward. He asked Mr. Hamlin his opinion. It must be frankly said that Mr. Hamlin would not have approved Mr. Lincoln's choice had he believed that the President-elect was free to act as he might personally desire in this instance. He still thought that Seward's proper

place was the Senate, and he did not think that Seward would make a successful and safe secretary of state unless he was held in check by a man of better judgment, more cautious nature, and less mercurial disposition. Mr. Hamlin looked at the proposition to take Seward from Mr. Lincoln's point of view, and as he had already heard and seen enough of the President-elect to satisfy him that he was preëminently a strong and discreet man, he came to the conclusion that Mr. Lincoln was right, and would better make Seward his secretary of state. He accordingly approved Mr. Lincoln's choice under the circumstances, and complimented him on his gracious act in thus recognizing his most distinguished rival.

Mr. Lincoln also brought up the names of Salmon P. Chase, Simon Cameron, and James Guthrie in connection with the Treasury Department. It is evident that Lincoln from the first favored Chase, provided that he would accept, of which there once seemed to be some doubt. Mr. Hamlin strongly approved of Chase for secretary of the treasury, and gave Lincoln his testimony as to the ability, character, and experience of Mr. Chase. Mr. Lincoln did not indicate that he had come to any decision, and in a general way mentioned Edward Bates for attorney-general, Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, Caleb B. Smith and Schuyler Colfax, both of Indiana, Montgomery Blair and Henry Winter Davis, of Maryland, Charles Francis Adams and Nathaniel P. Banks, of Massachusetts, John A. Gilmer and Kenneth Raynor, of North Carolina, Emerson Etheridge, of Tennessee, and Gideon Welles, of Connecticut, for the remaining positions. While discussing these and other men, Mr. Lincoln emphasized his desire to recognize the former Whigs and Democrats, in making up his Cabinet, as fairly as possible. His motto was "Justice to all," and it was on this principle that he distributed his favors and patronage.

The interview now came to a special commission which Mr. Lincoln had decided to intrust to Mr. Hamlin, and that was the selection of the New England member of the Cabinet. He said: "You shall have the right, Mr. Hamlin, to name the New England member of the Cabinet."<sup>1</sup> This also was unexpected, and therefore all the more pleasing to Mr. Hamlin. It was also a departure and was, moreover, a signal proof of Mr. Lincoln's wish to enumerate Mr. Hamlin among his personal friends and trusted counselors.

Mr. Lincoln gave Mr. Hamlin a list of names of men who had been suggested to him in connection with the Navy Department, but he did not say or indicate that Mr. Hamlin was to restrict his choice to this list. The fact that the men mentioned were all prominent, and had been urged on the President-elect by influential Republicans, was sufficient

<sup>1</sup> See *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed*, p. 614, for Lincoln's own account of this offer to Mr. Hamlin.



to cause both Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin to consider them without regard to personal preference. The most conspicuous thus mentioned were Charles Francis Adams, Nathaniel P. Banks, and Gideon Welles. Mr. Lincoln was as good as his word, and in discussing the various candidates did not try to influence Mr. Hamlin in coming to a decision. He did express his frank opinion of several, and did say of Banks that he was able, well known, and might make a capable executive, but he added: "It is for you to decide, Mr. Hamlin, and I mean that you shall name the New England man in the Cabinet." Mr. Hamlin met the situation with equal frankness, and dissented from Mr. Lincoln's estimate of Banks. He objected to the latter on the ground that he was a "trimmer in politics," and would not be satisfactory to New England, although a man of ability and high personal character. Banks had one peculiarity, that of "coming out for a party" in a theatrical way, as the politicians say, which laid the soundness of his political convictions open to suspicion. Mr. Hamlin's objections took Banks out of the list, and left Adams and Welles to be considered at leisure.

The interview closed with the understanding that Mr. Hamlin should investigate the fitness and support of Welles or Adams for the Navy Department, and also that he should undertake a delicate commission with reference to Mr. Seward. One thing made plain to Mr. Hamlin's mind was that while Mr. Lincoln believed it would be a popular act on his part to tender Mr. Seward the portfolio of the State Department, it was not certain whether he would accept it. Mr. Lincoln obviously wished to avoid the mortification of a declination, and he desired Mr. Hamlin to sound the New York senator to make sure that the offer would be accepted.

Before Mr. Hamlin left Chicago he met Mrs. Lincoln. No mistress of the White House suffered as Mrs. Lincoln did. Her husband was stricken down before her eyes, one of her children was taken from her there, and she herself did not escape the venom of those who hated the President. No wonder she left Washington sadly changed. But now she was at the height of her ambition. Strange it was that she should have said in her girlhood that she would marry only a man who was to be President, and should have made her choice between Lincoln and Douglas, when both were rising young men.

Mr. Hamlin left Chicago the latter part of November, and went to Washington to attend the now memorable session of Congress that opened in December, 1860. The scenes that accompanied the secession movement, now rapidly developing, were stirring; but while it was morally certain to Mr. Hamlin's mind that there was serious trouble ahead, the plans of the disunionists had not yet been sufficiently disclosed to show him what the danger in store was. As

he was on confidential terms with the incoming administration, and known to be in consultation with the President-elect, it was necessary for him to maintain a non-committal attitude, and therefore there is no word of his to be found in the "Congressional Record," at this stage of the crisis, that indicates his opinions. His most important occupation at this time was to assist Mr. Lincoln in perfecting the Cabinet, and he was in consultation with the President-elect until he came to Washington the following March to be inaugurated. One of the first things Mr. Hamlin did in connection with the Cabinet was to sound Mr. Seward. The New York leader was careful to avoid committing himself, and his cautious replies did not at first convince Mr. Hamlin that Mr. Seward would accept the secretaryship of state. Mr. Hamlin accordingly wrote Mr. Lincoln as follows in regard to Seward and other aspirants to the Cabinet : —

WASHINGTON, December 4, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have had an interview with Mr. King in relation to the position and desire of Governor Seward, and Mr. King prefers that I should confer directly with the governor. On the whole is that not the appropriate method? It seems to me so. That will, of course, indicate to Governor S. that he would be gratified in his wishes, and will be equivalent to a tender of a place in your Cabinet should he desire it. Shall I confer with the governor directly, and ask him what are his wishes and desires?

My impression is he will not desire a place in your Cabinet, but he may. I am now quite certain that Mr. Welles's position is just what I stated to you. But I will in a few days give you certain information.

I am satisfied Guthrie would not give his patronage in such a way as our friends would have a right to demand. If the patronage of the Treasury Department could not be given freely to our friends in the free States, it would be fatal.

I think the opinion of nearly all our friends here is decided that the Cabinet must be of a *positive* character.

I found Senator Wade decidedly of the opinion that Cartter and not Schenck should be taken from Ohio. I think he will ascertain the sense of the Ohio delegates.

Should not *one* man South, of Democratic antecedents, be in your Cabinet? I think so.

Yours sincerely,

H. HAMLIN.

HON. A. LINCOLN, President-elect.

Mr. Lincoln replied as follows, virtually placing the matter in the hands of Mr. Hamlin and Senator Trumbull : —

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, December 8, 1860.

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN :

*My dear Sir,* — Yours of the 4th was duly received. The inclosed to Governor Seward covers two notes to him, copies of which you find open for your inspection. Consult with Judge Trumbull, and if you and he see no reason to the contrary, deliver the letter to Governor Seward at once. If you see reason to the contrary, write me at once.

I have an intimation that Governor Banks would yet accept a place in the Cabinet. Please ascertain and write me how this is.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

The letters to Mr. Seward contained this tender of the first place in the Cabinet, and Mr. Lincoln's reasons for so doing. Mr. Hamlin and Senator Trumbull agreed that the former should make Mr. Lincoln's offer known to Mr. Seward at once. But there is a preliminary detail to explain. Although the sentiment of the party favored Mr. Seward's appointment, he was vigorously opposed by prominent men, one being William Cullen Bryant. As Mr. Lincoln made no sign at first regarding his cabinet plans, Mr. Seward and his friends became anxious, and Thurlow Weed, at that time a great power in the Republican party, journeyed to Springfield to urge Seward's appointment as secretary of state. But masterful and adroit as Weed was in presenting an argument and in catechising, he could not draw out anything favorable from the wary President-elect, and returned to New York in a depressed spirit. Mr. Seward, not unnaturally perhaps, took his cue from his friend Weed, and professed a disinclination to enter the Cabinet. This, then, was the situation when Mr. Hamlin received Mr. Lincoln's authoritative announcement. He accordingly asked Seward whether he had changed his mind about taking the secretaryship of state.

"No, no," was again Mr. Seward's reply. "If that is what you have come to talk to me about, Hamlin, we might as well stop here. I don't want the place, and if I did, I have reason to know that I could not get it ; therefore let us have no more talk about it."

"Very well," replied Hamlin, "I will say nothing more about it ; but before you express yourself to others as plainly as you have done to me, let me present you with this letter from Mr. Lincoln."

So saying, he handed Mr. Seward Lincoln's letter, offering that gentleman the post of secretary of state in the future Cabinet. Pale with excitement, Mr. Seward opened and read the communication. Then, turning to Hamlin, and grasping his hand, he said simply : —

"This is remarkable, Mr. Hamlin ; I will consider the matter, and,



in accordance with Mr. Lincoln's request, give him my decision at the earliest practicable moment." <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hamlin reported to Mr. Lincoln as follows:—

WASHINGTON, December 24, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR,— Your favor of the 8th with inclosures was duly received.

On consultation with Judge T., we could see no reason why the letter should not be delivered, and I therefore delivered the same, and yesterday returned you an answer.

I am not able to tell you what will be the final determination, though the gentleman has said decidedly that he would decline all places. But, as I wrote you before, he may reconsider his opinions. I enjoined entire confidence, and he said it should be observed.

I have been informed that the family of Governor B. has gone West, but do not know how it is. My decided impression is that Welles or Adams would be a better appointment than his for New England. . . .

Badger, the man holding to the constitutional power of Congress, is bitter against us.

Had not the Secretary of War ought to be a Southern man and a man of pluck? I am of that opinion, while the North should have the navy.

I regard Etheridge as one of the best and truest men we have.

I think there is much force in the suggestion that there should be one man from the South with Democratic antecedents.

I will not speculate on public matters. I am inclined to believe that your standpoint will enable you to judge better than I can here in the vortex of feverish excitement. I see no other course but to stand by our positions, and meet events with the firmness of men who know they are right.

In haste, yours sincerely,

H. HAMLIN.

HON. A. LINCOLN, President-elect.

Mr. Hamlin continued in his belief that a Southern man should be taken into the Cabinet, and in the end supported Montgomery Blair. He said little about this, however, but he corresponded further with Mr. Lincoln on the subject in favor of Blair. The following extract from a letter written by F. B. Blair, Sr., to his son Frank, throws a little light on the incident:—

SILVER SPRING, 27 December, 1860.

MY DEAR FRANK,— . . . Trumbull showed me a letter from Lincoln to Hamlin, in which the latter says he means to tender Mon't [Montgomery

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*.

Blair] a place in his Cabinet, but will not commit himself. This is a proper reservation. I mentioned it to your brother, who said he would be sorry to take a place if any circumstances should occur to change the favorable disposition now entertained.

Mr. Hamlin's reports to Mr. Lincoln were necessarily guarded and almost literal. Mr. Seward's manner when he received the tender of the state portfolio betrayed his eagerness, and in three days he accepted the offer.<sup>1</sup>

The New England member of the Cabinet was not so easily and quickly chosen. The selection of this man was contingent upon the antecedents of the other members. Mr. Lincoln had explained this to Mr. Hamlin, and the latter, without coming to an immediate decision, had canvassed quietly the availability of several candidates in order to settle on a man as soon as Mr. Lincoln could tell him how he was succeeding in balancing up his Cabinet. On December 24 Mr. Lincoln cleared the way by writing the following letter :—

I need a man of Democratic antecedents from New England. I cannot get a fair share of that element in without. This stands in the way of Mr. Adams. I think of Governor Banks, Mr. Welles, and Mr. Tuck. Which of them do the New England delegation prefer? Or shall I decide for myself? Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

Mr. Lincoln knew both Mr. Tuck and Mr. Welles, having served a term in Congress with the former, and having met the latter in Connecticut. But in specifying these candidates, it is evident from Mr. Lincoln's conversation with Mr. Hamlin that he did not intend to restrict a choice to them. They were prominent men, and had powerful friends to plead their claims. Mr. Tuck had ably represented New Hampshire in Congress for several terms, was well known and highly respected by the anti-slavery people. Mr. Welles had attained some prominence as an editor, legislator, and reformer in Connecticut. While Mr. Hamlin was free to recommend another man, he nevertheless felt under moral obligations to select one of the men Mr. Lincoln considered available. The President-elect had extended him the unprecedented courtesy of asking him to name the New England representative in the Cabinet, and Mr. Hamlin thought that the least he could do was to decide on one of the men Mr. Lincoln mentioned. Mr. Hamlin knew Mr. Tuck well, and highly esteemed him; in fact, they were lifelong friends, and he did not know Mr. Welles except by repute. He desired to bring to the Cabinet the one who would best serve the President and the party.

<sup>1</sup> For another account given by Mr. Hamlin, see Carroll's *Twelve Americans*, pp. 153, 154.

Mr. Welles derived strong support from his brethren of the New England press. It is not among the unusual things of this life for the able newspaper editor to say complimentary things about a contemporary; nor is it unusual to reprint remarks that are reciprocal in terms. It sometimes happens, also, that when a newspaper movement is started in the interest of an editor it becomes an avalanche of compliments. This was the case with Mr. Welles, and Mr. Hamlin consulted several of the leading editors, as well as the politicians of New England. One of the former was George G. Fogg, editor of the "New Hampshire Democrat," and a power in the Republican party of New England at this time. He was for years a member of the Republican National Committee, subsequently minister to Switzerland by Mr. Lincoln's appointment, and afterwards a member of the Senate for a short time. He vouched for Welles, and was satisfied that he deserved the support he received from the press. Another editor favorable to the Connecticut man was J. D. Baldwin, of the "Worcester Spy." In a letter to Mr. Hamlin dated February 22, 1861, he urged Welles's appointment, on the ground that the Republican party of Connecticut was dominated by men of Whig antecedents, and that unless the old Jacksonian wing, which was led by Welles, was now recognized, there was danger of the Democracy carrying the State. This view possibly had an effect on Mr. Hamlin, and thus Andrew Jackson was brought into Republican politics.

The limitations of space and the relative importance of the subject forbid the introduction of further evidence to show that Mr. Hamlin was intrusted with the selection of the New England member of the Cabinet. There was once a controversy about this, and the facts have been set forth to settle it in the interests of history. Mr. Hamlin afterwards believed and frankly admitted that he made a mistake in recommending Mr. Welles for the Cabinet. He did not shirk his responsibility and try to place it on Mr. Lincoln's shoulders. He shared the responsibility with the men who professed to know about Welles's competency, and vouched for it. But Mr. Hamlin's subsequent relations with Mr. Welles do not enter into this subject now, and it may be dismissed for the present by saying that Mr. Hamlin finally decided on Welles, and Mr. Lincoln, after receiving from the latter his opinions on various important issues, appointed him secretary of the navy. It should be added, though, that Welles was never his personal choice, and an incident which happened after Mr. Lincoln's inauguration shows this, and will be related in its proper place. Had circumstances permitted, Mr. Hamlin would probably have favored Charles Francis Adams, whom he well knew. But whatever regrets he may have had on this score, they were in a measure assuaged by the masterly services Adams rendered as the minister to Great Britain during the war.



## CHAPTER XXX

### FORMATION OF THE CONFEDERACY

WHEN Congress convened in December, 1860, secession appeared to be still trembling in the balance, although Lincoln had been elected the month before. President Buchanan's message in denying the government the power to prevent secession turned the scale, although it is now clear that the secession movement had been the growth of years, and was the result of conflict between two antagonistic civilizations. The actual outbreak of hostilities began when the reckless leaders of the slave power attempted to force slavery into Kansas. In the interval, they persuaded the Southern people that the only hope they had of preserving their institution was to extend it southward. They were convinced that Lincoln's inauguration would lead to legislation against slavery and the adoption of tariff laws inimical to the interests of the South. The majority were honestly of the opinion that they would have to leave the Union to maintain their independence. Thus, however erroneous their grievances were, they were none the less real to the great mass of the Southern people. They were, therefore, ready to establish another government when their leaders gave the sign.

This was the condition of affairs when President Buchanan officially admitted that in his opinion the government had no power to protect its own life. No worse blunder could have been made. This admission from the President was virtually an incitement to the secessionists to act. Naturally it was received as a confession that the North would not seriously resist secession. The hotheads of South Carolina who were in the lead had been threatening to pass an ordinance of secession. Now they seized their opportunity, and the die was cast. But although the action of South Carolina struck a popular chord in the cotton States, there was an embarrassing halt in other Southern States. There were many Southern people who did not believe that the grievances presented by the slave power warranted the rupture of the Union. But headstrong leaders who lusted for power, and were fanatical in their hatred of the North, now began that shameful course of dragooning hesitating States and men into revolt which is the blackest page in the history of the slave power.

Mr. Hamlin's feelings at this time were those of a man who feared

a mad act, and, though prepared for it, was shocked when it came. The proofs of the slaveholders' conspiracy, and the complicity of the administration, as they were revealed from day to day, filled him with burning indignation against the men who were responsible and with heartfelt pity for those who were their victims. Thus, while he could not forgive some men for the course they pursued at this juncture, no one ever heard him say an unkind word about the men who were misled by others. More than one sincere Confederate soldier, who afterwards sat in Congress with him, can bear testimony to the cordiality of the intercourse Mr. Hamlin maintained with men of this kind. It was his nature to forgive rather than to cherish resentments. He rejoiced at all signs of reconciliation which he saw during the latter part of his life, and he would have equally rejoiced at the patriotism that the South displayed in the war with Spain; but while his kind heart impelled him to say little about the human instruments of the civil war, his own regard compelled him to speak plainly when certain men were the subject of controversy. He held Northern "dough-faces" such as Pierce and Buchanan almost equally culpable with Southern leaders such as Jefferson Davis, Howell Cobb, R. M. T. Hunter, John B. Floyd, Jacob Thompson, Barnwell Rhett, and others.

Lawrence M. Keitt, a fire-eater from South Carolina, exclaimed in a speech at Washington, "The President is pledged to secession and will be held to it!" There were two interpretations placed on this: one, that Buchanan had given the arch-conspirators a written pledge that he would not interfere with secession if they would nominate him for President; the other, that this statement by Keitt was the vapor-ing of a desperate man, who was blustering to overwhelm the opponents of secession. Mr. Hamlin was asked his opinion of Buchanan, and his reply was, "What did he do to prevent the Southern States from leaving the Union?" He knew Buchanan. He took his measure long before Mr. Buchanan became President. In 1856 he described Buchanan as follows: "The present dynasty of the slave power has put in nomination a man suitable for its purposes — James Buchanan." He never had occasion to change this opinion. But he did not base his estimate of Buchanan on suspicion; he arraigned him on his record, and his mature analysis of Buchanan's acts as President is presented substantially as he gave it to his son Charles, in several conversations on this subject.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. Hamlin's belief, Buchanan obtained his nomination for President by pledging himself in writing to the leaders of the slave power that he would not oppose secession. Mr. Hamlin said that this might never be proved, and yet he could not account for Buchanan's conduct otherwise. It is well known that the Confederate government destroyed many papers incriminating Northern men.

Mr. Hamlin could not understand how a man of Buchanan's long public experience could issue such a message at this crisis and under circumstances so peculiar unless he had been tied hand and foot. Mr. Buchanan had served in Congress, as secretary of state, minister to Great Britain, and as President. Surely he had intelligence enough to know that to assert that the government had no power to prevent secession was to encourage the conspirators. If Mr. Buchanan believed what he said, where did he find authority to send troops to Kansas to force slavery on a free people? But he had said then that the people of Kansas were in a state of insurrection, and that the law must be enforced. Now he asserted that while secession was wrong, and therefore an injury to the government, he could take no steps to stop it. If he were a loyal Unionist, why did he accept the advice of Jefferson Davis and other disunionists in preparing his message? If he had been free to act, why did he permit avowed secessionists to remain in the Cabinet, send government arms southward, and scatter the navy to the four quarters of the globe? If he professed to be a Union Democrat, why did he not follow the precedent of Andrew Jackson in quelling the nullification and secession movement in South Carolina?

When now the message was out, Mr. Buchanan proceeded to live up to his views of the Constitution. The actual crisis came when the South Carolina conspirators demanded that Forts Moultrie and Sumter should be surrendered to their "nation." But the President could not rise to the emergency, although his oath as commander-in-chief rendered it obligatory on him to protect the government property. He did refuse to yield up the forts, but by his refusal to garrison them properly he made it easy for the insurrectionists to capture them. Moreover, by declining to send troops to the forts, he made it an incentive for the conspirators to attack them. He pleaded that he did not have enough forces at hand to guard the forts, yet General Scott, the commander of the army, had insisted to the contrary, and had

Probably a few were kept in existence, and it was too early to publish them when this record was written. The reader is referred to a suggestive statement made in the *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. xi. 1883, p. 575, in a review of the *Life of James Buchanan*, by George Ticknor Curtis. This squarely controverts the claim set up by Mr. Curtis, that Buchanan did not sympathize with the secessionists, and says: "When we come to review that part of the book, we shall find it an easy task to show that Mr. Buchanan (along with Northern Democrats generally) fully believed in the right of a State to secede, and did not hesitate to say (we shall publish an autograph letter from him to that effect) that unless the Southern States had full guarantees that their rights would be protected in the Union 'they would be fully justifiable in seceding.'" But this letter was not presented in any subsequent issue of the *Southern Historical Society Papers* up to the time of publishing this record, and inquiry by the author failed to procure a copy of the letter.



urged this course with all his ardent patriotism. Moreover, Mr. Buchanan refused this against the protest of the Secretary of State, General Cass, who then went to the extreme length of resigning his seat in the Cabinet. General Cass had taken a political view of slavery, but he could not and would not take an uncertain view of his duty to his country. His act in retiring from Mr. Buchanan's official household was a patriotic crown to his long life, and at this juncture it was second in importance in inspiring the Northern Democracy with patriotism only to the prompt and chivalrous support Stephen A. Douglas rendered the Lincoln administration at its most critical stage.

Mr. Hamlin's anxiety and indignation are plainly expressed in the following hastily written but interesting letter to his wife on December 15, 1860 :—

“This morning it is said that Cass has resigned his office of secretary of state on the ground that the President will not reinforce the forts at Charleston. The principal one is Fort Moultrie, and it has but about sixty men. Major Anderson, of Kentucky, is in command, and his wife has called on the President and asked him to send more men. She says her husband is a brave man (and so all say), and will defend the fort as long as he has a man. That they are so few is exposing them to murder by the rabble ; it is not an equal contest. *It will be murder and nothing else.* This weakness in numbers is little else than an invitation to attack. It is also said that General Scott urges the propriety of sending men at once. Still the President will not do it, and for my life I cannot see why the President is not just as guilty as the men in South Carolina. Under this state of things General Cass has resigned. While he has always heretofore yielded to the South, I honor him for what he has done. I hope he will have the courage to come out in a clear statement of the case to the public, but I fear he will not. I presume we shall know in a few days what he will do. But what he has already done will thrill the public, and lead them to look with amazement on the position which the President occupies. Cass will remove much of the odium from his name, while the President will go hence with the curses and execrations of millions upon his head, ‘unwept, unhonored, and unsung.’ I trust this may bring men in the South back to reason and reflection, and produce a better state of things. I hope so at least.”

All hopes were in vain. President Buchanan persisted in his inactive, vacillating, and obstinate course. He refused to heed the voice of the North, the advice of his loyal counselors, and the prayers of Mrs. Anderson, and reinforce the forts in Charleston harbor. He said that it could not be done, and this frail woman shamed him herself by bringing to her devoted husband the reinforcement of her own loving and inspiring person. He received the “Commissioners” of the “Sovereign Nation” of South Carolina, and met their arguments with wringing hands and tears. He allowed the traitors in the Cabinet

to remain, drawing government money and plotting against its life until even the fragment of self-respect they had left, or the fear of discovery of their peculations and financial dishonesty, compelled them to get out. But they had accomplished their design, and while traitorously holding their offices under the government, they had helped let loose a flood of calumny, prejudice, misrepresentation, and falsehood that swept thousands and thousands of innocent people from their anchorage. The tide of secession was past human control when Mr. Buchanan called Jeremiah Black, a changed and wiser man, to the head of the Cabinet, and gave him Edwin M. Stanton, Joseph Holt, John A. Dix, and Horatio King for his loyal associates. The mischief was done. But whether it was within human power to nip secession in the bud, Mr. Buchanan cannot escape censure for failing to purge his official household and the atmosphere of the White House from the continued presence of avowed disunionists when their conduct aroused the suspicions of people of less intelligence and experience than he possessed. His record as presented by his most ardent defenders is that of a shifty, timid, convictionless man, and his course of inaction is now seen in the light of a confession of inability and incompetency, and an utter failure.

Now that South Carolina had yielded to the fever of secession without the government lifting a finger to arrest disease in its body politic, it was only a question of time when other States would be seized. The slave power had the requisite machinery in its hands, and it proceeded to batter down the Union sentiment that still existed in the South, and which would have remained a bulwark against disunion had there been fair play. The passions of thousands and thousands of innocent men were inflamed by venomous charges that the North now contemplated the subjugation of the South, and that the Lincoln administration would wage a war of extermination on slavery and violate the rights and liberties of the people of the South. In vain trusted Southern men like Alexander H. Stephens, Kenneth Raynor, John Minor Botts, and others pleaded for the Union; in vain Stephens himself asked what single right of a Southern State had been transgressed by the North. The tide of prejudice, hatred, and ignorance was rising. Opposition was drowned out. In not one Southern State that joined the revolt was the proposition of secession submitted to a fair popular vote. Cotton was king, and the slave aristocracy was in the saddle for its last ride.

When now States began to secede from the Union, Mr. Hamlin gave up what faint hopes he might have had left of prompt measures by the President. He thought it best to resign his seat in the Senate on January 17, because it was thought that his acts might be interpreted as foreshadowing the policy of Mr. Lincoln, and also because

it was believed that his successor, who was to be Mr. Morrill, should be inducted into office as soon as possible. He did not witness, therefore, the portentous withdrawals of the majority of Southern senators nor hear their charges of Northern aggression. He had answered some charges, and showed that the protective tariff was of Southern origin. He had heard "Bob" Toombs admit on the floor of the Senate that Maine's Bill of Rights was fair and constitutional. He had proved that the fisheries bounty fostered the national navy. He had also demonstrated that the slave power was the aggressor. He had sat in the Senate and heard Webster pulverize the apostle of secession. He had found the secessionists unable to gainsay the written records of the fathers of the Union which they had framed to be perpetual. The grievances of the South were the pretext of the slave power. Mr. Hamlin's desire for prompt measures was now strengthened, and he decided to advise Mr. Lincoln to that course, as the sequel will show.

The responsibility of the slave power for bringing on the war of the rebellion against the government is now as clear as daylight ; but the responsibility of the individual leaders in starting the secession movement is not so easily determined. The sentiments of Rhett, Toombs, Wigfall, Clingman, Benjamin, Slidell, Yancey, and other fire-eaters were known to all and admitted to be consistent ; but the complicity of Jefferson Davis and others who afterwards came to the front was not so clear. The North was surprised, in fact, to find Davis among the conspirators, and Mr. Hamlin was both shocked and grieved. He had believed that Jefferson Davis's sense of honor, his judgment, and his obligations to the government would prevent him from joining the mad, blind rush out of the Union fomented by a wicked organization that worked only for its selfish interests. Mr. Hamlin and others of the stalwart Republican type had privately — and Zachariah Chandler openly — warned Davis, Hunter, and others of the responsible Southern senators that the North would fight, and Mr. Hamlin could not see how Davis and men of his position could be so foolish, or so infatuated as to pursue a course that would in his opinion inevitably lead to civil war. It is true that Jefferson Davis had always held to the doctrine of state sovereignty, but it is also to be remembered that he made loyal speeches at Dexter, Augusta, Belfast, and Portland, Maine, in the summer of 1858. But a year later he saw the drift of events, and told the people of Mississippi that the election of a Republican President would justify secession. His haughty nature, quixotic conception of his duty to his government, and over-leaping ambition led him to take the step that ruined him. But pity for the man cannot blind history to the fact that Jefferson Davis was a traitor.



The first effect of the secession movement on the North was to demoralize the Republican party, and some of its leaders at Washington lost their heads. There was still a fatuous belief in the "glue of compromise," and still faith in the sonorous deliverances of conferences. The performances that followed the withdrawal of Southern States from the Union are not a part of the creditable record of the Republican party. The South was entreated to return to the Union, and offers were made that were humiliating. Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, proposed, for example, that the Constitution should be amended to make slavery perpetual, though it is right to say that he afterwards receded from this extraordinary position. There were offers from other Republican congressmen to give the South more than it had asked. The doctrine of squatter sovereignty was indorsed. A peace congress was held at Washington which was presided over by John Tyler, a former President, but now a traitor at heart, and subsequently a member of the rebel Congress. Compromises were produced that were as effective as the paper on which they were written. The attitude of some Republican leaders was like that of an indulgent parent now begging a rebellious child to do the very things for which he had originally chastised it. No wonder Douglas strutted and claimed vindication; no wonder the old Whigs said Webster's seventh of March speech was justified.

Mr. Hamlin was humiliated and disgusted at this behavior of his Republican colleagues. In his mind it could only strengthen the belief among the conspirators that the North would not fight, and, worst of all, it would amount to a confession in the eyes of the Southern masses that the North was the aggressor. The refusal of the Southern leaders to accept the degrading terms of surrender offered was a confession of their insincerity in charging the North with being the aggressor, but that did not excuse the weakness of the responsible Republicans. Mr. Hamlin thought that with States already out of the Union and urging others to join in the revolt, the inevitable crisis had at last arrived, and that it was time to prevent the remaining Southern States from entering it by taking prompt measures to suppress the rebellion against the government. What was the use of trying to harness two dissimilar civilizations together longer with laws that were galling to each? When the slave power had exceeded its rights, willfully outraged the free people of the North, and was now trying to disrupt the Union, why not take it by the strong hand of the law and restrict the institution under limitations that would render it impossible for the thing to spread? He did not yet advocate extermination, nor did he until the slaveholders' rebellion began, when their own act justified emancipation.

The measures that particularly excited Mr. Hamlin's displeasure,

and of which he made a record, were the Crittenden compromises. They were offered by John J. Crittenden, whose devotion to the Union was no small factor in preventing Kentucky from joining the Confederacy. But his compromises provided for the perpetual establishment of slavery south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , and thus, it was charged, would have encouraged the slaveholders to grab more land from Mexico, seize Cuba, and perhaps land in South America. Mr. Hamlin wrote Senator Fessenden as follows, on January 23, 1861 : —

“What of the movements at Washington? Is there to be a miserable and humiliating compromise by which we as Republicans are to be disgraced? I trust not, and yet I have my fears as I look at things from my standpoint.

“It seems to me that Crittenden is doing more mischief than all the fire-eaters in the land. Has he an idea that his scheme can be carried out by guaranteeing slavery in all the continent south of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ , for it amounts to that? When it comes to that, it will be time for us to try secession.”

Fessenden, who was likewise disgusted, hastened to relieve Mr. Hamlin's anxiety by assuring him that the Crittenden compromises were doomed to defeat, and would get few Republican votes.

The futility of compromise was made more obvious in Mr. Hamlin's eyes a few days later, when the Southern Confederacy was formed and Jefferson Davis inaugurated president. This was the beginning of the end, and he decided to join Mr. Lincoln as soon as circumstances would permit. The approach of inauguration day gave Mr. Hamlin his opportunity, and he planned to meet the President-elect at New York city, on his eastward journey to Washington. Mr. Hamlin's experience on his way to New York is another record of patriotic demonstrations and an additional proof of the loyalty of the masses. The tributes he received were spontaneous; his speeches were impromptu. On February 11 Mr. Hamlin and his wife left Hampden, and, escorted by numerous friends and neighbors in sleighs, proceeded to the city line of Bangor, five miles from his home. There they found an immense crowd awaiting their arrival to conduct them to the railroad station. There was a line of sleighs over a mile long. At the head was a sleigh containing Mayor Isaiah Stetson, Elijah L. Hamlin, ex-Governor Edward Kent, Hollis Bowman, George W. Pickering, and other former chief magistrates of Bangor. Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin took their seats in this conveyance and were taken to the station, where thousands of people had gathered to cheer off the Vice-President-elect.

Mr. Hamlin's farewell speech was as follows : —

“Neighbors and fellow-citizens, — While it would have better comported with my own feelings to have quietly departed from my home, I am

profoundly impressed by this demonstration of your kindness and respect. The emotions which stir within me have no adequate language for expression. I can but tender you the honest thanks of a grateful heart. For nearly a third of a century I have resided in your midst, and my highest ambition has been to secure your confidence and good-will, and to-day I am cheered in the belief that I have not been wholly unsuccessful. To me this confidence and friendship of my neighbors, and of citizens with whom I have associated, has a higher value than any political position that men can give.

"I go to the discharge of official duties which have been conferred on me by a generous people. Relying upon a Divine Providence, I trust that the confidence shall never be betrayed. A man may cheerfully lay his life upon the altar of his country, but he who surrenders his integrity loses self-respect and the respect of others. I know full well that dark clouds are lowering around the political horizon, and that madness rules the hour. But I am hopeful still. Our people are not only loyal to the government, but they are fraternal to all its citizens; and when its practice shall be demonstrated that the constitutional rights of all the States will be respected and maintained by following the paths illumined by Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, may we not reasonably hope and expect that quiet will be restored, and the whole country will still advance in a career which will elevate man in a social, moral, and intellectual condition?

"Whatever may betide me as a man, or in my official position, I will endeavor through all to stand faithfully by my duty and the right, and I shall hold even my life at the service of my country. Looking to Him in whose hands are the destinies of all nations as well as individuals, and who has been our safety and our shield in the past, and with a firm and unshaken reliance upon His care and protection, let us look hopefully to the future. If there are any storms about us like those in the physical world, they will leave a purer sky and clearer atmosphere when they have passed away."

The next important demonstration occurred at Worcester, Mass., where the railroad station was jammed with an enthusiastic crowd awaiting a sight of the Vice-President-elect. William Cross, on behalf of the people gathered, asked Mr. Hamlin to speak, and as the shouts were incessant he came to the platform of the rear car and said:—

"Men of Massachusetts, — Your generous tones speak truly for the heart of this ancient commonwealth. You who are gathered here are the best representatives of the blessings of intelligent and protective free labor, and the sentiments of your hearts are worthy of the fame of the old Bay State. I know you are sometimes charged with being too fanatical, and I fear your complaint is chronic. [Cheers and laughter.] It comes from old '76, and I have no apologies to offer for you. [Cries of "Good, good!"] I sympathize with it too deeply. [Enthusiastic cheering.] Friends, maintain like men the principles



of the old Bay State, and all will be well. Liberty was rocked in the cradle in Massachusetts [cheers], and, my friends, stand by it in its old age, and see that it receives no blow, and you will" — the train suddenly started, and brought Mr. Hamlin's remarks to an end, with the crowd following the train as long as they could, enthusiastically cheering and waving their hats at the bowing Vice-President-elect.

The scene at Hartford was described by the correspondent of the "New York Tribune," who was on board the train, as follows: "There was a clamorous multitude at Hartford who were set wild by Mr. Hamlin's appearance when he was introduced by Mayor Deming, a Democrat, who spoke of Mr. Hamlin as Vice-President-elect of the United States of America, and who made a truly eloquent speech. Mr. Hamlin responded cordially to the introduction and reception, and continued in a few words interpreting the fidelity of the sovereign people to the government. His remarks were necessarily brief, but the multitude hung on every word he said, and expressed their feelings by rapturous applause, and, swaying to and fro, seemed almost beside themselves with enthusiasm. A lady of Hartford presented Mr. Hamlin with a beautiful bouquet."

When Meriden was reached another great crowd stormed the railroad station and called for a speech. Mr. Hamlin was taken into the baggage car and addressed the people as follows: "We may disagree somewhat in our political opinions, but we can have but one of our duty to that country to which we owe our allegiance — an allegiance which must be assumed by every instinct and principle of manhood, and if necessary with our lives. [Cheers.] I think I know something of the New England head and the New England heart. [Cries and cheers, 'That's so!'] I think I know that they are earnestly loyal to our Union as it is. [Cheers.] And I think I know that that heart and head are willing to concede to all Americans every constitutional right to which they are entitled. [Great cheering; and here an Irishman created a disturbance by yelling something about 'Sectionalism,' 'Black Republicanism,' and 'Know-Nothingism,' but he was subdued and the Vice-President-elect continued:]

"We welcome the outcast and the downtrodden of all nations to our shores; from the hovels of Ireland, from the mines of England, from the vassal-fields of France, only demanding in return that when they have come and joined us in this grand triumph of self-government they shall be true and loyal American citizens. [Vociferous cheers and many times repeated.] We only ask, and only intend to ask, that all who are born beneath the benignant folds of our stars and stripes, and all who adopt that flag as the standard of their choice, shall be loyal to the idea it typifies, and in that loyalty discharge all their obligations." [Rapturous cheering.]

The "Tribune" correspondent painted an interesting picture of the scenes along the route. "The track was in excellent condition and everybody in good spirits. The people gathered in great masses along the way at every station, crowded in the windows, clustered in bevvies on contiguous roofs, and grouped in knots on the neighboring hills and along the fields eager to catch a glimpse of the distinguished passenger, and hurraing in the most indescribable and unprecedented manner as the train flew along. The approach of Mr. Hamlin had been announced but a short time at the stations, so that the mammoth gatherings were necessarily, as spontaneous as the speeches of Mr. Hamlin, yet the receptions were characterized by a depth of feeling that must have warmed the heart and strengthened the resolutions of the recipient."

The crowd at New Haven was enormous, — larger and entering into the spirit of the occasion with more zest, if possible, than at Hartford. The immense depot was crowded to overflowing, thousands being unable to make their way within reach of Mr. Hamlin's voice. The cheers of the multitude brought out the Vice-President-elect, and he was introduced by Mr. Babcock, of the "Palladium." In expressing his pleasure at meeting such a vast assemblage, Mr. Hamlin said that he had been greatly gratified at the outpouring of the patriotic people along the route, — "from the rural towns, where quiet and plenty are to be found; from busy villages, where the hum and din of machinery tell of thrift and enterprise; from the cities of commerce and wealth towards which flows the tributary streams of these industries; from all my points of travel have come forth to greet me a true, strong-hearted people, inspired with devotion to a common cause and a common inheritance. [Long and continued cheering.] I accept these ovations not as personal tributes, for men are lost sight of in crises like these; they are as unimportant as the lightest atoms that float in the atmosphere. [Loud cheers.] It is devotion to common principles that bring you together, — the great principles of the fathers of the republic, now represented in the nation by that great and good man whom the people have elevated to the highest office within the gift of any nation on the face of the earth — Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois. [Cheering threatened to be irrepressible.] Now, my friends, the Union, as our fathers made it, and as it is now, must and will be perpetuated and handed down as a blessed legacy to future generations."

The "Tribune" added that, at the close of this eloquent and patriotic speech, the cheers of the immense multitude were almost deafening, and the crowd surged at Mr. Hamlin to greet him. "Now it happens that the Vice-President-elect has a big heart and a most cordial manner, inclining him to humor the people in all their little

eccentricities of welcome, vigorously shaking hands all over instead of going at it with his finger tips ; and it also happened on this occasion that the zealous crowd, apparently frantic with enthusiasm, much more than reciprocated the cordiality of their guest. In fact, in the process of handshaking and congratulations, the Vice-President-elect lost his balance, the people captured him, and the train moved off, leaving its distinguished passenger to fight his way out of the crowd of extravagantly affectionate sovereigns of New Haven."

Mr. Hamlin exclaimed, "Fellow-citizens, if I had the arms of Briareus, and I believe that he had one hundred, I would give them all to you."

The "Tribune" continued : "What were the feelings of the youthful and interesting Mrs. Vice-President on the prospect of going to Washington alone, deponent saith not, for she did n't ; but the loss was discovered on board, and the train brought to a halt. Meantime, Mr. Hamlin took his chances among the convened thousands and stood on his muscle. His late audience was hugely excited at the prospect of his becoming their guest ; but to do them justice, they jostled and hustled him very tenderly, considering the state of the tangled mass, and he emerged into the air undamaged, save in a slightly demolished beaver. In reaching the waiting train, Mr. Hamlin exhibited powers of locomotion that did great credit to his physique."

Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin reached New York city without further incident worth recording in time to join Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln at dinner in their suite at the Astor House. The President-elect was genial and unaffectedly glad to welcome his associate and wife ; Mrs. Lincoln was brilliant, and an exceedingly pleasant hour was passed at the table. Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin were charmed with Mr. Lincoln's kindness of manner and perfect simplicity of nature. He recounted his experiences coming from his home, and listened with great interest to Mr. Hamlin's account of the continuous receptions he had met. All the signs augured a patriotic uprising in support of the government, and yet, while no man could but feel elated at the demonstrations such as Mr. Lincoln had received, his bearing was free from any suggestion that he felt they were personal. Naturally he did not talk about his policy, but his ardent patriotism disclosed itself in significant words and sentences, and in his looks and nods of approval when he heard or told of incidents that pleased him. He expanded, and the glow of his genial personality warmed his guests to him more strongly than ever. Even in little things, Mr. Lincoln's ingenuous disposition was revealed. When, for instance, oysters on the half shell were served, he looked at them with a half-doubting, half-smiling look and said, as if he had never eaten such a dish before, "Well, I don't



know that I can manage these things, but I guess I can learn." He would not resort to a polite artifice, or pretend even in the case of oysters.

In the evening the presidential party was taken to the Academy of Music to a performance of "The Masked Ball." There was a great demonstration on the part of the audience when Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin appeared in a box, after which the curtain rose, and the chorus came forward with the national flag, while Miss Hinckley and Adelaide Phillips sang "The Star Spangled Banner." The orchestra then played "Hail Columbia," and Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin had to bow repeatedly to the audience that was well-nigh frantic with enthusiasm before the performance was allowed to continue. After an act the party withdrew and returned to the Astor House, where Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Hamlin held a reception with General James Watson Webb as master of ceremonies. Mrs. Hamlin held a private reception in her parlor subsequently with General Robert Schenck, Truman Smith, and other well-known men assisting.

Mr. Lincoln's appearance in New York city created a patriotic ferment, and when it became known that both the President and Vice-President elect were in the city, another wave of patriotic excitement swept over the metropolis. Soon after the presidential party had returned to the Astor House, a band of music and cheers were heard. The Wide Awakes—an army of them was coming to serenade Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin. The scene in front of the hotel was described as unprecedented. Broadway was a solid wall of humanity. The adjoining buildings were black here and there with crowds of men in the windows and on the roofs. Torches flared and cast a weird light over the scene, bands crashed, and the multitude cheered itself hoarse. Mr. Lincoln had already spoken in the city, and did not desire to respond again. General J. H. Hobart Ward, who was to distinguish himself as one of the bravest soldiers the Empire State sent to the front, waited with other members of the Wide Awake Central Committee on Mr. Hamlin, and induced him to speak. He appeared on the balcony, and said:—

"I am gratified to hear these generous tones that come from the honest hearts of men who occupy the empire city of New York. [Cheers.] They speak as if with a devotion to the principles in which all have a common interest. They speak to me the evidence, the love, they bear the common country. [Cheers.] They satisfy me here in this great commercial mart that the heads, the hearts, and the hands of our people are ready to vindicate the government under which they live, and which they have received from their fathers. [Cheers and cries of 'Good! That's the way to talk.'] They tell me how truly a government like our own may repose upon the popular will; they

tell me how truly the great, the good and honest man that you have elevated to the first position that man can bestow [cheers] will receive in all times that loyalty which the citizen owes his government, and that with your hearts and hands you will rally to its support in sunshine and in storm."

In the midst of this jubilation there were rumors that a plot to assassinate Mr. Lincoln had been discovered. It is now known that there was a plot, but when the story was brought to Mr. Lincoln's ears, Mr. Hamlin noted that the President-elect was "as calm and serene as a summer morning." But those around him were greatly alarmed, and the result was that he was persuaded against his own judgment to make the now famous secret journey to Washington. This was the first and only time Mr. Lincoln ever evaded danger, and to the end of his life he regretted that he yielded to the pressure of his friends. But perhaps he acted for the best. Mr. Hamlin shared Mr. Lincoln's confidence, and as there was no fear in him of physical danger, he was averse to taking any steps that might seem to reflect on his courage. Only once in his life did he carry a pistol, and that was when he was a raw congressman, and had not fathomed Southern bluster. He was asked subsequently whether he "carried arms when he was the war Vice-President." "Yes," he replied, with a twinkle in his eye, and holding up the arms nature provided him with, and which had muscles like steel, he added, "these were what I carried, and they were good enough to knock a man down any day." But against his inclinations Mr. Hamlin was forced to modify his plans in a slight measure for prudential reasons, although in the main he adhered to his original itinerary.

Mr. Hamlin left New York city on February 22. The Jersey ferryboat, the John P. Jackson, was gayly decorated in honor of its passenger, thus making his presence known. In the party besides Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin were congressmen-elect Charles W. Walton, John N. Goodwin, Frederick A. Pike, Samuel C. Fessenden, and John H. Rice, of Maine; David Davis, of Illinois; George Lewis, of New Haven; J. W. North, of Minnesota; Mark Howard, of Connecticut, and Colonel Allen and Mr. Comins, of Boston, who were in charge. When the boat arrived at Jersey City, Mayor Van Vorst, Mr. Zabriske, Mr. Gaddis, and other prominent citizens welcomed Mr. Hamlin, who bowed his acknowledgments to the people present and at once boarded a special train. The only departure made from the original programme was taken before passing through Baltimore, when Mr. Hamlin seated himself in another train. Perhaps this was for the best. Baltimore was a hotbed of secessionism, and the Union element was overborne. Mr. Hamlin lay quietly in his berth as the train rolled into the Oriole City. The station was filled with rough

characters, and the temper of the crowd was unmistakably hostile to the Union. There were oaths heard that "no damned Abolitionist like Lincoln or Hamlin should enter the White House," and the mob seemed capable of carrying out its threats. The ruffians were there to watch the trains for Mr. Lincoln, and a horde of them rushed through Mr. Hamlin's car. Some of them even brushed aside the curtains of his compartments, and stared at him, but failing to recognize the Vice-President-elect, the uncleanly creatures took themselves away, leaving an atmosphere of profanity and whiskey behind them.

Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin reached Washington without further annoyance, and were met by Mr. Seward and Mr. Washburne. Mr. Lincoln arrived subsequently, and Mr. Hamlin joined him at a dinner at Mr. Seward's house,<sup>1</sup> where they discussed the policy and prospects of the new administration. In his accounts of this and many other interviews with Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Hamlin gave members of his family the bare facts without the details that would have made them of greater interest. His habit of reticence and aversion for anything that approached gossip closed his lips. Then, again, he consulted with presidents and statesmen generally as one business man would consult with others—to accomplish an object, and if he succeeded, that was the end of it. But the facts of this and other interviews on secession disclosed the various attitudes which Mr. Lincoln and these two advisers took towards that vexed problem. Mr. Hamlin feared that the situation was more dangerous than Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Seward did. He was also more radical, and advised the President-elect to enter on a course to prevent secession from spreading. Mr. Seward was conciliatory, and took a rosy view of the outlook that was in consonance with his subsequent prediction when the war broke out,—that it would end in ninety days. Mr. Lincoln's nature placed him between these two extremes. He was less radical than Mr. Hamlin, and less optimistic than Governor Seward. He was willing to use force, but not unless he was compelled to, for fear that the border States might be irritated into revolt. He desired that if war broke out the entire responsibility should be on the secessionists, and was mapping his course to that end. This was the essence of the interview, and the only comment to be made now is what Mr. Hamlin made years afterwards in speaking of this policy: "Perhaps Mr. Lincoln was wiser than the rest of us."

<sup>1</sup> *Seward at Washington*, p. 511.



## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE SLAVEHOLDERS' REBELLION

THE beautiful weather and scenes around Washington seemed to betoken the opening of an auspicious era when Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin were inducted into office on March 4, 1861. The city was inundated with Northern men, many of whom were armed, and little was heard from the secessionists or their sympathizers, who were still lurking about the capital. Mr. Hamlin's inauguration took place first in accordance with custom. At noon he was escorted to the senate chamber by Senator Foot, where a great throng of people packed the place. The Senate presented the spectacle of the lion and the lamb lying down together. A correspondent drew an interesting picture of the scene which almost breathed a holiday atmosphere. The spectators in the densely crowded galleries seemed in a gala mood, while there appeared to be no enmities on the floor. The truculent Wigfall, of Texas, was seen gossiping and joking with senators whom he had pitched into with fiery zest, and Vice-President Breckinridge spent most of his time on the Republican side of the house. The final touch to the picture was the "youthful Mrs. Hamlin, smiling down from the gallery on her noble looking husband," who was to take the second office in the land to which he had climbed from the printer's case. There was nothing in this scene that hinted at the approach of a bloody war.

The inaugural ceremonies were brief. Senator Foot, who was to be the President *pro tempore* of the Senate, escorted Mr. Hamlin to a seat on the dais at the left of the Vice-President's chair. The courtly Breckinridge then announced that he was ready to administer the oath of office to his successor. Mr. Hamlin thereupon arose and said: "Senators, an experience of several years as a member of this body has taught me many of the duties of its presiding officer, which are delicate, sometimes embarrassing, and always responsible. With a firm and inflexible purpose to discharge these duties faithfully, relying upon the courtesy and coöperation of senators, and invoking the aid of Divine Providence, I am now ready to take the oath required by the Constitution, and to enter upon the discharge of the official duties intrusted to me in the confidence of a generous public."

Mr. Breckinridge then administered the oath, and with his declara-

tion that the Senate stood adjourned the ceremonies were closed. Vice-President Hamlin then called the Senate together to enter upon the special session. He next swore in several newly elected senators, and then President Buchanan and President-elect Lincoln entered the Senate to begin the inaugural ceremonies of the latter. They were conducted to seats in front of the secretary's chair, when Vice-President Hamlin announced the order of the presidential procession. The marshal of the District of Columbia, the Supreme Court of the United States, the sergeant-at-arms of the Senate, the President and President-elect, the Vice-President, the members of the Senate, the diplomatic corps, heads of departments, governors of states and territories, the mayor of Washington and Georgetown, and other persons who had been admitted to the senate chamber. The procession proceeded in this order to the platform on the central portico of the Capitol, where Mr. Lincoln became President. The Vice-President with his son Charles sat near the new executive.

The scene presented remained a memorable picture in the minds of those who saw it. Lincoln's tall form towered before a sea of upturned faces that reflected loyalty to the government. There were only a few troops visible. A singular comment on the situation was the presence of President Buchanan, Chief Justice Taney, and Senator Douglas, whom Lincoln had arraigned in a strikingly original manner with Pierce, as the four workingmen — Stephen, Roger, Franklin, and James — who had constructed that piece of machinery compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision — an indictment which the people had accepted. Mr. Buchanan seemed in a state of impending collapse, and sighed continually. Mr. Taney drank in every word Lincoln uttered, with hardly a change of expression or attitude. Douglas was bold and manly. He paid Lincoln delicate personal attentions, and plainly showed by his manner and comments that he intended to give the new administration a chivalrous support. He held Lincoln's hat, and when he heard a point he liked he would nod his head emphatically, and say in hearty tones, "Good! That's right!" The attitude Douglas assumed at this critical period was worth an army to the administration. Thousands of men who had followed him now gave their support to the Union. His friendly bearing typified a coming union between the loyal Democrats and Republicans to perpetuate the nation, and for this reason it is pleasing to leave him pictured as the patriot rather than as the partisan.

Mr. Lincoln's inaugural address was framed on the lines he had indicated to Mr. Hamlin. The purpose was to conciliate, and hence Mr. Lincoln endeavored to allay apprehensions at the North and the South that he might not rise to the emergency, or contemplated a war

on the South and its institutions. He delicately, but firmly asserted the power of the government to maintain itself, and yet at the same time pledged himself and his party anew not to interfere with slavery where it was protected by the Constitution. He demonstrated with elementary clearness that the existence of the government implied its right of self-perpetuation, and he proved that secession was a self-destroying force by showing that if carried to a logical conclusion it would take States out of the Southern Confederacy, and also disintegrate States themselves. He held that the Union had not been broken, and announced that he should collect the revenues, though without resorting to measures that would irritate, with a portentous reminder that the issue of war was in the hands of the South. He closed with that exquisite appeal to sentiment that would have had an effect on those to whom it was addressed had they not been too blind to see that the responsibility of beginning the strife was now theirs. When Mr. Lincoln took the oath of office a free negro who was standing at the end of the platform was seized with an inspiration, and raised the national flag that had been hanging low on its staff.<sup>1</sup>

The one thing about Abraham Lincoln that most strongly impressed itself on Mr. Hamlin after their close intimacy had been established was the remarkable growth he attained while President. Indeed, Mr. Hamlin was of the opinion that no man ever grew in the executive chair in his lifetime as Lincoln did. Thus, with this view of the President, Mr. Hamlin understood him better than the other radicals, and expected him to succeed when they feared failure. But while Lincoln's growth has long been a favorite theme with writers and speakers, it has not always been presented in a way that is fair to all who surrounded him. The men who tell the king what they believe to be the truth, and honestly try to point out his mistakes to him, are truer friends than those who always say the king is right, and tell him what they think he would like to hear. When the smoke of the civil war was cleared away, and the correct proportions of Lincoln's figure were seen in their colossal dimensions, his extreme eulogists made the mistake of constructing a Lincoln who was as great the day he left Springfield as when he made his earthly exit four years later. Lincoln's astonishing development was thus ignored, and also the unique group of fearless, plain-spoken men who surrounded him. It remains, therefore, for the philosophical historian to determine their influence on Lincoln, and perhaps through their eyes he may find the true Lincoln a more interesting and greater man, certainly a more human being.

There is no intention of reviving an issue that once caused wide

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of the Hutchinsons.*



dissension in order to vindicate any one man, or any set of men ; the purpose is to present both sides of the issue in order to make a complete record. Mr. Hamlin came to the ultimate opinion that Lincoln was the greatest figure of the age, and he based this on his accurate knowledge of the man and his acts. But he saw two Lincolns, and the one who had emerged from the former had risen to greatness through his growth and his ability to profit by early mistakes. The one came from Illinois, inexperienced in wielding great power ; the other was the conqueror of a gigantic civil war, the emancipator of slaves, master of the political situation, and savior of the nation. If the first Lincoln made a mistake in believing that the secessionists would listen to a conciliatory policy, it is pertinent to ask whether the second Lincoln, armed with his experience with the duplicity of traitors, would have approached the crisis of 1861 with his peace policy. If the first Lincoln committed no error in endeavoring to conciliate the South, it is perhaps equally pertinent to inquire whether a summary suppression of the secession movement would not have fortified the Union anew with slavery perpetuated. The answer to this is that the radicals, if they had had their way, would have overthrown the institution, or hedged it in with restrictions that eventually would have killed it.

Thus, at the threshold of his administration, President Lincoln confronted mightier problems than any President had faced since Washington. The long talked of Confederacy had been established, there was a radical difference of opinion among his advisers as to his course of action, the treasury was empty, traitors were blustering in Congress, and the office-seekers were overwhelming him. The agony of mind the harassed man suffered as he paced out his thoughts in his midnight vigils can only be imagined. But when Mr. Hamlin saw Mr. Lincoln during this terrible tension, he rarely yielded to the fearful depression he must have endured, though now and then an anxious look, a wearied gesture, or despondent tone, would escape him. He was generally cheerful in manner, invariably kind, frank, and courteous to his associate. He was deliberate and cautious in speech, and frequently would meet questions by asking one. Sometimes he would sit with his arms hugging his knees, and listen with a far-away look in his eyes. When it was his turn to answer, his face would often light up with a smile that almost transformed him into a handsome man. His voice was gentleness itself, but his manner suggested the firmness in the man. There was an air of natural dignity about him that drew the line between friendly and obtrusive advances, and yet welcomed warm, fraternal approach and intercourse. Mr. Hamlin could not help liking Mr. Lincoln if he could not like his policy.

These interviews served to reveal the ultimate considerations that

led Mr. Lincoln to cling to his hold-back policy. There was, first, his desire to place the responsibility of war on the South, which he had hinted at; second, his fear of getting in advance of the people; and third, his own Kentucky fibre. He expressed himself in his customary shrewd way and by asking questions. He did not say even now that the South would fight, but he would admit his fears that it might. He would ask if the prospects of keeping the border States in the Union were not improved by the maintenance of peace. He did not say that he feared the people of the North would not rally to the support of the Union if the government took the initiative, but he would ask in a significant way how much longer the Greeley Republicans would cry "No coercion," and where the money was coming from to support an army. Mr. Hamlin replied that in his opinion the Confederacy was an organized rebellion, and would carry other States into revolt unless prompt measures were taken. He said that his experience among the plain people he had met satisfied him that they would come to the aid of the government, and that the loyal States would raise the necessary money. He thought that the "no coercion" cry would not avail, because in the forcing of a crisis the people would forget doctrinaires and fight to preserve the Union. This was the difference between the President and his radical advisers until the crisis came, as outlined by Mr. Hamlin to his son Charles.

Mr. Hamlin soon obtained an insight into the peculiar personal qualities of Lincoln through several incidents that happened about this time. When Sumner was introduced to the President he proposed, in his good-natured way, that they measure to ascertain the difference in height. But the senator from Massachusetts, who had no sense of humor, was decidedly ruffled, and read Lincoln a little lecture on the necessity of presenting united fronts to the enemy. Lincoln told this story on himself with evident appreciation of the humor of the incident, and added in a droll way: "Sumner is a good piece of a man, but do you know, he's just my idea of a bishop?" Mr. Hamlin, who was a capital story-teller himself, brought up Colonel James Dunning, of Bangor, one of the best raconteurs in the country, and introduced him to Lincoln right after his inauguration, with the suggestion that he tell a story. Colonel Dunning hit on a problem that was vexing the President, and related the story of the soldier who was hauled up before a court-martial for compelling a man at the point of a gun to eat a crow. "Do I recognize this gentleman?" he asked in his blandest tones. "Ah, yes, he's the gentleman who dined with me yesterday." The story was peculiarly apropos. Lincoln shouted with laughter, and said to Colonel Dunning, "Come up to the house some night this week and tell me some more of your stories."

There were numerous incidents of this kind that served to place President Lincoln in a false light before some good, but easily disturbed people. There were traitors still shouting treason in Congress, rebel commissions were floating around Washington, and the Confederacy was gaining strength, while the President was telling stories! Mr. Sumner and his followers, for example, did not believe that Mr. Lincoln was serious enough to grasp the situation. But others, with a keener knowledge of human nature, had learned to see in the President a many-sided man of singular humanity. Mr. Hamlin, for one, perceived in Lincoln's story-telling proclivities another revelation of his felicitous art of illustration, and his seeking for a temporary escape from the crushing troubles of the times. But while traitors were allowed to declaim in the halls of Congress unmolested, and rebel commissioners appeared to have some show of authority for communication with the government, it was all for a purpose, and the end was not far. While the President still earnestly sought to negotiate with leaders in Virginia, North Carolina, and other Southern States, he was nevertheless looking out for Fort Sumter. He endeavored to provision it in accordance with his expressed intentions, and would not allow it to fall into the hands of the South Carolina secessionists. In this he manœuvred with great skill, and succeeded in placing the secessionists on the aggressive, with the responsibility of opening the armed conflict.

The leaders of the Confederacy now found themselves in an embarrassing predicament. They no longer had a President to deal with who tolerated traitors and secession spies in his councils, and who professed conciliation, but practiced ruinous concession; they were dealing with a man who had sincerely offered conciliatory measures, but who was the incarnation of Union loyalty. They realized that to take a step backward now was to demolish the Confederacy amidst the laughter of the world. They had been accustomed to supremacy so long, and were so blinded with passion, that they did not stop to count the cost. They made no account of the vast public and private obligations the South and its people owed to the government and the North; they ignored the hundreds of millions of dollars the Northern people had paid into the common treasury to help buy new States for the South, to make improvements in all the Southern territories, to pay salaries to officials therein; they ignored the enormous individual claims Northern merchants had on their people; they forgot that the South was dependent commercially on the North. But they did not forget the teachings of the Northern "dough-faces," and the voice of their own ambitions and hatred. They did not believe that the North would fight, and they were now sure that the Southern masses were thoroughly imbued with the revolutionary



spirit. When a fire-eater told Jefferson Davis that "Alabama would be back in the old Union in less than ten days unless he sprinkled blood in the face of the Southern people," he ordered the blow struck. Sumter was fired on, April 12, 1861, and the conflict was begun.

The special session of Congress lasted only a few days, and before its close Mr. Hamlin retired from his chair, in accordance with a custom that required the Vice-President to absent himself from Washington after his induction into office to give the dignified Senate ample time in which to choose a president *pro tempore*. Before Mr. Hamlin left Washington, difference of opinion as to the possibilities of war had become more pronounced among the Republican leaders. Chandler, who may be fairly called the war senator, was furious over the state of inactivity which prevailed. He urged President Lincoln to arrest Breckinridge, Wigfall, and other traitors who were making disloyal speeches in Congress, and to knock down the Confederacy. He always insisted that this course of action would have stemmed the tide of secession in Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky, and brought the war to a speedier close. On the other hand, Seward was still pooh-poohing secession, and predicting that the recalcitrant States would return. Sumner, radical as he was, equally failed to gauge the temper of the Confederacy. "Bullies, braggarts!" he exclaimed, "they would be assassins if they dared, but fight fair, never!" Mr. Hamlin adhered to the opinion that the South would fight, and departed from Washington in a gloomy state of mind. He was at his home in Hampden when the news came that Sumter had been fired on, and he said to his wife: "They have been talking fight all these years; now we will show them that we can fight!"

President Lincoln's proclamation calling for 75,000 men for three months, and for the convening of an extra session of Congress on the 4th of July, was the answer of the government to the attack made on its integrity. While this was received with enthusiasm throughout the North as a sign of the administration's purpose to defend the Union, it was nevertheless severely criticised by the advanced leaders of the Republican party, who were convinced that a great war was before the country. The administration asserted that the call was made under the act of 1795, which authorized a requisition only for 75,000 militia for three months, and finally that the state of the treasury and army rendered it impossible to equip more men.<sup>1</sup> The radicals argued that the President should have convened Congress at once and asked for an act providing the government with

<sup>1</sup> "The error (call for only 75,000 men) could never be wholly repaired. That war was fought through to a conclusion in which the one deplorable element was that it ought to have been reached some years earlier."—*New York Tribune*, April 23, 1898.

half a million men.<sup>1</sup> They asserted that the loyal States would pour out their men and treasure,<sup>2</sup> and that the summons for only 75,000 men was like sending for a bucket of water to put out a fire. Finally, they argued that the subsequent convening of Congress in July and the President's request for at least 400,000 men and \$400,000,000 justified their demands on him in the first place.

The keynote to the hour was confusion, and as men were not omniscient, Mr. Hamlin at his distance could not judge of all the President's motives in calling out so small a force when the long expected rebellion had at last broken out. But when traitors in Virginia had whirled the Old Dominion into revolt by force and fraud and had seized Harper's Ferry and the Gosport navy yard; when traitors tried to rush Maryland into the insurrection, and Baltimore rebels had fired on the Sixth Massachusetts when it was coming to the rescue of the capital, and the administration still acted as if it had called for a sufficient number of troops, Mr. Hamlin became anxious and feared that President Lincoln was still undeceived as to the possibilities of the rebellion. But he afterwards regarded Mr. Lincoln's slowness at this point as a part of his development. He had come to the presidency new and untried, and it was natural that he should at first rely on his constitutional advisers, and particularly Seward and Scott, who had long been leaders of the parties he followed. Seward, however, was now predicting that the war would be over in ninety days, and Scott's conservatism and old age prevented vigorous action. Mr. Lincoln had to gauge his advisers and also to develop his own great executive powers, which only events could bring out.

While affairs were in this state, and Washington was in danger of capture, Mr. Hamlin received word from Lincoln that his presence was desired at New York city to aid the leading men of the metropolis in formulating and executing plans to defend the Union. When Mr. Hamlin traveled on to New York, the chorus of the people was swelling over the North. On all sides Mr. Hamlin saw signs of a mighty uprising and a determination to save the Union.<sup>3</sup> The attack on Sumter had stung the people, and they desired to vindicate the nation's honor. But they now saw that the slaveholding cabal would pull down the Union and separate it into petty principalities that might jar among themselves and be the prey of foreign nations. They saw their lives, liberties, interests all threatened, and by a

<sup>1</sup> Chandler urged President Lincoln to raise a force of 500,000 men. See his biography.

<sup>2</sup> There was not a loyal State of the North of 1,000,000 inhabitants that would not have furnished the entire number. Grant's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> New York voted to raise 30,000 troops for three years and \$3,000,000. Pennsylvania likewise appropriated \$3,000,000. Other States were also in advance of the administration.

common impulse patriotic Democrats, such as John A. Logan and John A. Dix, vied with the Republicans, such as John A. Andrew and Andrew G. Curtin, to arouse, direct, and equip the masses for the coming struggle between a free people and a slaveholding aristocracy. Douglas's last and best message to the people was the slogan of the hour, "There can be none but patriots and traitors now."

Mr. Hamlin reached New York city on April 23, and found the metropolis in a blaze of patriotism and ferment of activity. The news had come that Washington had been cut off from communication with the country, and that the rebels were shouting "On to Washington!" But that served to stimulate the patriotic leaders of New York to greater action, and at this moment the men who acted independently certainly rose to the situation. General John E. Wool, commander of the Department of the East, a splendid veteran of more than seventy years, came from Troy to take charge of affairs in New York city. The Union Defense Committee coöperated with him, and Mr. Hamlin was also in consultation. He took headquarters at the Astor House, and wrote to his wife that his rooms were crowded night and day with men from all parts of the country, who desired to confer with him; but no names are given, and the record is necessarily incomplete in this respect. The story of Mr. Hamlin's work is interesting, however, in throwing some light on the feelings of the hour and his attitude towards the administration. He kept his promise to Mr. Lincoln and gave him his advice, which none but a perverted mind could see in any other light than honest and sincere.

When the Union troops reached Washington, and communication with the seat of government was restored, two things happened that moved Mr. Hamlin to speak frankly to Mr. Lincoln in a letter which is a reflection of the feelings of the hour. Secretary Cameron appears to have been responsible for two orders which in Mr. Hamlin's judgment were serious mistakes, and brought out from him a strong protest. General Wool, it would seem, accomplished a most important work while acting in an independent capacity in New York city. While telegraphic communication with Washington was cut off, many authorities in the Northern States looked to General Wool for instructions and advice, since he stood second in command to General Scott. He not only hastened the shipping of troops to Washington by way of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac, and contributed towards fortifying the city, but he also set military preparations on foot in nine other States. As soon as communication had been established between the capital and the country, Secretary Cameron ordered General Wool back to Troy, against the protest of the leading men of New York city. The reason given was that General Wool's health "was known to be feeble." A month later another



explanation was furnished, that in issuing orders to the governors of various States on their applications for arms, "without consulting the government," he had seriously embarrassed the War Department.<sup>1</sup>

The second blunder related to the disposition of Pennsylvania troops. When Washington was cut off, General Robert Patterson, of the Washington division, whose headquarters were at Philadelphia, saw at once that the war was no ninety days' affair, and promptly made a requisition on Governor Curtin for 25,000 more troops, which were speedily furnished by the vigorous and far-seeing executive of that State. In the midst of his busy duties Mr. Hamlin opened correspondence with Governor Curtin, and the latter's reply of April 24 is of interest: —

"I received your letter by Professor Mitchel this morning.<sup>2</sup> We have two regiments at Annapolis, three at York, Pa., and two at Chambersburg, and these have all been mustered into the service of the United States, and under the command of the officers of the Federal government; we have five regiments mustered at Philadelphia in addition; we have nine in the field, — about 19,000 men, and could raise an army of 50,000. Until yesterday we had only arms for four regiments, but now we are supplied. I do not apprehend any doubts that the troops at Annapolis will reach Washington, and that the true policy is to assemble a large army in this State, with troops from New York, Ohio, and Indiana, and *go to Washington through Maryland*. I recognize the wisdom of all your suggestions, but am controlled by the command of the Federal officers."

This vigorous and aggressive plan of action was not carried out, apparently on account of Secretary Cameron's opposition. He nullified General Patterson's requisition on the ground that Pennsylvania had provided the government with her share of troops. But Governor Curtin's opinion of the scope of the war was not that implied by Mr. Cameron's course, for he held the 25,000 men in reserve, and was vindicated in a few days by an order from Secretary Cameron calling for the same troops. This shifting and halting policy greatly disturbed Mr. Hamlin, and he was disappointed in Secretary Cameron. The probable explanation is that Mr. Cameron was out of his element in the War Department, and was hampered by his political entanglements in Pennsylvania. His fearless and aggressive nature led his old associates in the Senate to favor his appointment to the War Department, though he had talked for peace. Yet they believed that he would wake up to the situation when in charge of the department, and were disappointed. He subsequently retired to more congenial labors, and was succeeded by Stanton. But not to anticipate, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Lossing's *History of the Civil War*, p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards General O. M. Mitchel.

Hamlin wrote President Lincoln the following frank letters, which were obviously never intended for publication, — the kind of letters a hard-pressed, earnest man might write with men at his elbow giving him no time to think of the elegancies of composition : —

THE ASTOR HOUSE, NEW YORK CITY, April 24, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR, — I wrote you yesterday briefly. I desire to add to-day that our people are deeply anxious at the state of the country, and are ready to a man in the loyal States to rush to the support of the government with all their means and their lives. I am sure the enthusiasm which is burning in the hearts of our people can be appreciated by mingling with them.

Let full and ample power be placed somewhere in this city to act in all matters as the times demand, until full communication can be had with Washington. Let every effort be made and everything be done which human measures can accomplish. There must be open communication between here and Washington come what or cost what it may. Energy I trust will work all the departments of the government. If they will come up to the point now maintained by our people it will be well. They cannot exceed it.

In haste, yours truly,

H. HAMLIN.

To the President.

On April 26 Mr. Hamlin wrote President Lincoln the following letter : —

MY DEAR SIR, — The world has never seen such a spectacle as is now presented in the loyal States. In no age or country have been seen such a people as we have who rally for the government, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws. Amidst all the cares that press upon, this is a matter of profound congratulation.

Does our government feel its full strength? I fear they cannot. The only course now to pursue is one of promptness, energy, and power. The whole power of the government should be exerted. *There is safety in no other course.*

I am here to advise and consult with our friends, and will try and discharge any service that may be required.

Yours truly,

H. HAMLIN.

To the President.

On April 28 Mr. Hamlin wrote his wife : —

"We all feel easy in relation to Washington, though we had a most painful anxiety for several days. The force now there is some 16,000, and this week will double it. I think we may say *all is safe*. All feel here a want of energy at Washington, but I can make a generous allowance for it from their position. They did not know with what promptness the whole North

and West were responding. I now think we will witness more efficiency. Our best men have gone to tell them they must act with vigor, or the people will take the matter into their own hands, and they will do it. Washington safe, we must and will have a direct communication with Washington through Baltimore, or over its smouldering ruins. It must and will be done. There must be no rebels in the rear. God grant the administration shall be equal to the emergency. Then all will be well."

The record of Mr. Hamlin's work in New York city is chiefly confined to his letters, but it is easy to see how a man of his activities would strive to promote all movements and plans brought to his attention which would be of aid to the government. He consulted with the leading men of the metropolis, mostly about raising troops and money; but there is interesting evidence of his ideas of the preparation the government should make for war, which is another proof of his views regarding the scope of the rebellion. At this time the patriotic women of New York city were engaged in formulating relief organizations, out of which came the United States Sanitary Commission. This accomplished almost incalculable good, and its work is its best testimonial.<sup>1</sup> It disbursed over \$5,000,000 in money, and \$15,000,000 in provisions among the soldiers of the Union, secured the enforcement of the proper health regulations in the camps, obtained good medical attendance for the sick and wounded, and generally supplemented the government in caring for the soldier. The Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows was the real creator of the commission. He and others laid their plans before Mr. Hamlin, and he strongly approved. The first step was to hold a public meeting and advocate the union of all relief societies under one central organization.

The meeting was held at Cooper Union, on April 29, under the auspices of many of the leading women of that city.

Mr. Hamlin said:—

"Mr. President and women of New York,— In a time like the present which is one of action rather than words, and in such a presence, there is, indeed, an embarrassment in the language I might use to express my thoughts. The cold logic of the head would hardly seem to do justice to the occasion, while the warm and generous impulses of the heart might be obnoxious on the charge of boasting, which is neither an evidence of patriotism nor courage. And, still, if I can say a single word—for which none but myself will be responsible—to aid or cheer you in the rugged path of duty, I am willing to contribute that word. We present to-day such a spectacle as the world has never witnessed in any age or country. In all the loyal States there beats in men and women's bosoms but one single

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mary A. Livermore says, in her *Story of the War*, that the government at first opposed the Sanitary Commission, and that President Lincoln called it a "quixotic plan."



heart. And that heart beats in vindication of our common country and the liberty we inherited from our fathers. We have differed in opinions upon the passing questions of the hour, but they are passed and are a sealed book. Let the dead bury the dead. We are here to-day forgetful of the past. We live with the stirring present around us, only in bright hopes of the future, and in the discharge of duties that devolve on us depends that future. Why is it, that you women in such vast numbers from this empire city have gathered from your humble and your luxurious homes? Why is it? Why is it but that you feel as men feel, that all that we have and all that is valuable in life is at stake and is imperiled?

"There is nothing from the stirring mart of commerce up to all the endearments that cluster around the domestic altar that is not in the issue. Of what use is commerce in all its ramifications — of what use is home with all its endearments, without it is guarded and protected by the law? All these are assailed by those who are attempting to subvert the government under which we live. The stars, which are the hopes, and the stripes, which are the emblems of liberty, have been ignominiously dishonored; our public property and our fortifications have been assailed and taken by rebels from their rightful owners; and the government under which we live is threatened with subversion. These are the things that have stirred the hearts of men and women until all are united. These are the things that have brought you together here — these are the causes that have united us all as one. And let me say, there is no other course to pursue now but the vindication of the integrity of the government under which we live. It is a false philanthropy — it is a false humanity that shall falter now in this trying hour of trouble. The safety of the republic consists in the energy and efficiency of the government. The loyalty of the people is unquestioned. Destruction only is with those who falter.

"These are stirring times, and now we must test the question whether we have or have not a government. To abandon that question is to abandon all. In one sense of the word there is some truth in the allegation that the contest is a sectional one. In the broader and more comprehensive view it is not so. It is a question of government or no government. That is the true question which we have to settle, — whether we have a government, whether we received that government from our fathers, and shall perpetuate it for those who come after us. This is the question, however variously sections may array themselves upon either side. How we are cheered along the pathway of our duty by the kind and cordial aid which woman gives! You have met here for the purpose of protecting more thoroughly an organization which shall be of incalculable benefit to the cause. Your sons, your husbands, your brothers, who have gone forth to battle for all that you hold dear and valuable to you, will be sustained in the hour of conflict and in the hour of pain when they know that their mothers and sisters are devoting their best energies to give them comfort, whatever their condition and wherever they may be. Our grand cause and the prayers that will go up to heaven for them and for their cause will stimulate them in the hour of battle and after it shall pass away.

"God bless you, women of New York! Rome in the days of her culminated power never witnessed scenes like these. The world has never seen it. Here palatial parlors are devoted to the manufacture of useful and necessary articles for sons, brothers, and fathers who have gone to the war. You have met here to systematize your work, and to invite the coöperation of others throughout the land. Let me tell you they will come from every green hillside and every valley from all over New England, my home, and from every loyal State. They will coöperate with you; they will form one grand central point, pour in their contributions, and send to you those who are competent to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and wounded. They will coöperate with you, with their humble hands and their means — will join with you in their prayers to Heaven to aid that cause which all know to be so just. And with your coöperation, with your prayers, and appealing to the God of heaven for the rectitude of our purpose and the purity of our cause, we know liberty shall be perpetuated in our land."

The North did not know until Washington had been relieved and securely fortified how admirable had been the conduct and bearing of President Lincoln under these trying circumstances. But now that he was compelled to give up his merciful plan of conciliating the South, he went to work like the warrior of old to strengthen himself at every point for the coming conflict. Following Jefferson Davis's atrocious act in encouraging and legalizing piracy on the North's shipping interest, President Lincoln had blockaded the Southern ports. Now that war was inevitable he called for 60,000 soldiers and 14,000 sailors for three years within three weeks after issuing his original proclamation. Not long after these events the public came to a better understanding of Mr. Lincoln's character and the terrible burden he was bearing. He was always patient, kind, and courteous, and with his gentle ways and felicitous power of statement he was winning the public heart. But he was also rapidly developing his great executive ability, though it required time for his associates to understand this many-sided man, and to learn that he often guided without seeming to do so.

Mr. Hamlin remained in New York city until the second week in May, where he had received trustworthy information concerning the plans of the administration. His home letters reveal a more satisfied spirit, and express the belief that "President Lincoln will come up to all expectations," to quote a phrase several times repeated. One incident happened that illustrates the great care President Lincoln was taking to ascertain the exact number of troops that were sent on from New York city. He did not intend to have any "troops on paper" if he could avoid it, and he wrote Mr. Hamlin on May 6: —

"Please advise me at the close of each day what troops left during the day, where going, and by what route; what remaining at New

York, and what expected in the next day. Give the numbers as near as convenient, and what corps they are. This information, reaching us daily, will be very useful as well as satisfactory."

Mr. Hamlin now returned to Maine to aid in raising troops, and the story turns to the Pine Tree State, which was true to her motto in this emergency.



## CHAPTER XXXII

### FIRST YEARS OF THE REBELLION

THE record that Maine achieved in the civil war is imperishable history, and, together with the deeds of Howard, Chamberlain, Berry, and other gallant sons, a proud part of the annals of national patriotism; but in this volume it would be incomplete without the story of Vice-President Hamlin's work in strengthening the government in its struggle for existence. Maine relatively furnished more troops than any other loyal State, and it is also claimed in her behalf that she raised the first company of volunteers which was organized in response to President Lincoln's proclamation of April 15, 1861. The story is of both historical and personal interest, and is the most striking proof that could be offered to show Mr. Hamlin's views of the approach of war when Northern statesmen were in doubt. Maine also furnished many officers whose gallantry and character need no testimonial, and Mr. Hamlin's personal interest and faith in them are also a part of the record. He himself, too, to set convincing example, served in the ranks, and his belief in the plain people was again illustrated in a unique way.

When Colonel James Dunning, of Bangor, was in Washington to attend the inauguration of Lincoln and Hamlin he made use of his opportunity to ascertain the opinion of the statesmen present as to the possibilities of war. He himself was a shrewd observer, and was at once impressed with the extreme differences of opinion. He made up his mind that the optimists must be wrong, and his opinion was confirmed by Mr. Hamlin. In his account of this interview with his friends Colonel Dunning related the following story:—

"I had known and followed Mr. Hamlin for years. I believed in him more than in any other statesman of the time, and I asked him squarely whether he thought there was going to be a war. It was understood at that time that President Lincoln did not expect one, and Mr. Hamlin's sense of courtesy would not allow him to say anything in public at this delicate stage in opposition to the President's views. But to me, an old friend, he spoke out with oldtime fire and frankness.

"‘Dunning,’ said he with great earnestness, ‘there’s going to be a war, and a terrible one, just as sure as the sun will rise to-morrow.

Those Southerners mean fight, and I know they do. We ought to lose no time in getting ready.'

"I was so strongly impressed," continued Colonel Dunning, "that I at once said to the Vice-President that when I got home I should raise a company at my own expense, and tell the people of Bangor to prepare for war.

"God bless you, old friend!" was Mr. Hamlin's reply; and when I returned to Bangor I at once prepared to raise a company of men to place them in the field as soon as they were called for. This was company E of the Second Maine, and which I believe to have been the first volunteers to offer themselves in response to President Lincoln's proclamation."

Colonel Dunning's prediction of war surprised his friends in Bangor, and his private assurances of Mr. Hamlin's convictions startled them. But not a few ridiculed his fears, and when he announced his intention of recruiting a company, a personal friend went so far as to tell him that he was "crazy." He applied to this man for the keys to a building which he desired to use as quarters for his men. His request was denied, and he took a room in Broad Street. He next sought out Captain Levi Emerson, a retired police officer, who had once been in his employ, and was a cool, discreet man, a crack shot, and a good type of the self-made, law-abiding, plain people who composed the bulwarks of the Union's defense. Emerson had always followed Mr. Hamlin, and when Colonel Dunning told him that the Vice-President predicted war, he promptly accepted his offer and went to work hunting up recruits. Emerson was regarded at first as a victim to a delusive war craze, but he answered, "There's going to be a war, Vice-President Hamlin says so, and he knows." The result was, he soon had a nucleus with which to begin. When the news of the attack on Sumter came, Colonel Dunning had Emerson erect a flagstaff in front of his headquarters, and set a drummer named Heath at work.

Recruits came in rapidly, but there were some formalities to observe. The company was enrolled under the militia act of April, 1851, and there was more or less red tape to cut. But the men virtually organized before they could officially act, and on April 18 and 19 they perfected the last details of formation, when they received a telegram from Governor Washburn accepting their services and ordering them to rendezvous at the expense of the State. Their appearance when they marched to the city hall created no little amusement, the general idea being that the war was a scare. Emerson was the first to enlist, and the following is the roll: Levi Emerson, James Adams, William Lyon, Hiram E. Brackett, Hiram B. French, Henry Warren, Joshua Ray, George A. McClure, Sabin

Jordan, George M. Carlisle, Jr., Hall J. Libby, of Bangor ; Henry M. Cushman and Horace B. Washburn, of Brewer ; C. W. Graves, Frederick Burns, Reuel Jewett, Calvin S. Chapman, Cyrus Rogers, O. W. Pratt, A. F. Barden, Samuel Dearborn, blacksmith, E. L. Stirling, Bangor ; George Barton, Monroe ; Thomas Foster, Bangor ; Abner Boden, Brewer ; Freeman Norton, Jonesport ; Elden Keen, Henry Roach, Abiathar Sanborn, Otis F. Hooper, Bangor ; Warren Day, George H. Phillips, Veazie ; Harvey Emery, Frank L. Sawyer, John Toray, Lyman E. Richardson, Wayne ; John O'Mara, 2d, Philip Riley, Bangor ; S. Wilson Smith, St. Albans (erased) ; C. L. Downs, George York, Brewer ; R. W. Hall, George S. Sullivan, H. P. Crowell, Roscoe G. Wally, James Campbell, John Moore, Knox ; C. N. Whitney, John McNeil, Bangor ; Albert S. Russ, Samuel Niam, Old Town ; C. Barrett, Hermon ; A. L. Page, drummer, Brewer ; Washington L. Martin, Daniel Tibbetts, Jr., Hermon ; Albert G. Furbish, Hampden ; Albert J. Otis, Nashua, N. H. ; Charles A. Woodbury, Hermon ; William Berry, Orrington ; H. S. Willis, Jr., Alton ; A. J. Snow, Brewer ; B. F. Willey, H. V. Whitcomb, Alton ; Franklin Buliers, Stephen W. Dawson, Lewiston ; Michael Hogan, Galen Worcester, Patrick Peters, Robert Quimby, Philip Harback, Alexander Chase, John R. Thurston, Ruel S. Clark, Charles W. Merrill, Bangor ; Alonzo B. Luce, Newport ; C. R. Robinson, John G. Joy, Sebec ; and John P. Drummond, Bangor.

Governor Washburn called a special session of the legislature, following the President's proclamation, to obtain the authorization necessary for raising the troops. The War Department made a requisition on Maine for only two regiments, and yet the legislature voted to enlist ten regiments for a term of two years, unless sooner discharged, and also authorized a loan of one million dollars. It is not necessary to add that Mr. Hamlin was in constant consultation with Governor Washburn, whose promptness and far-sightedness won his warm approval. When Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine, the Pine Tree State was beating her ploughshares into swords with all the energy her hardy sons could command. The First and Second Maine, which were the regiments required by the War Department, had already been organized, and were waiting word to report for duty. Mr. Hamlin arrived in Portland on May 10 to assist in receiving the First, which, under the command of Colonel Nathaniel J. Jackson, was soon at Washington, and received its baptism at Bull Run, where, with the Second, it acquitted itself creditably. Mr. Hamlin thence hurried on to Hampden to keep up the recruiting in that part of the State. He was certain that the President would call for more troops when Congress convened in July, and there was no time to lose.



The people of Hampden and the neighboring towns had arranged to have a flag-raising in honor of Mr. Hamlin's return home, but he suggested that they should make use of the opportunity to recruit men for the war, and he proposed that they should have an old-fashioned muster in addition to the flag-raising. The yeomen flocked for miles around, and Mr. Hamlin appears to have taken charge of the affair. One of the eye-witnesses of the occasion was Mrs. Edward Jackson, a neighbor of his, and her account is interesting. Mr. Hamlin fraternized with the plain people as friendly as of yore, although there was an air about him that plainly drew the line between friendly and familiar advances. He met them singly and finally addressed them collectively. His speech was short but very impressive, and it was notable as an open declaration of action. This striking sentence all remembered: "There should be no temporizing now, no going back in this contest between Anarchy and Freedom." In closing, Mr. Hamlin appealed fervently to his countrymen to take up arms in the defense of their country, and said that he was ready to lay down his life if the sacrifice was necessary.

Then a picturesque incident followed. While the people were still cheering and pressing around the Vice-President he shouted:—

"Now we will have a drill."

"But, Mr. Vice-President," some one objected, "we have no arms."

"No arms?" replied Mr. Hamlin, smiling. "Why, look at that fence," said he. "Let every man take a picket for a gun."

So saying he rushed at the fence with the crowd after him full of his enthusiasm. Mr. Hamlin ripped off a picket, and, in the twinkling of an eye, the fence was stripped of nearly every picket. "Take your places in line," Mr. Hamlin next commanded, and speedily there was a long line of earnest men armed with pickets in lieu of guns, receiving, most of them, their first lesson in the manual of arms from the Vice-President of the United States.

Some one afterwards commented on this method of breaking raw recruits into their duties by saying that it was at least original. "Well," replied Mr. Hamlin, with a twinkle in his eye, "it was certainly an improvement over the 'hay-foot, straw-foot plan.'"

The Second Maine was now ordered to Washington, and its departure from Bangor on May 14 was an event of historical and personal interest. This was one of the finest regiments Maine sent to the front, and its record as an organization and the achievements of its men are an inspiring page in the history of the Pine Tree State. The officers composed a group of notable fighters, and their cool, resolute men were a worthy command. Charles D. Jameson, of Stillwater, was the colonel, and he was a dashing, able, magnetic leader. His brilliant work during the comparatively short time he was

in service attracted attention at Washington, and he was regarded as an officer of great possibilities. But alas! he was one of the unnecessary sacrifices to the blundering, do-nothing Peninsular campaign. Charles W. Roberts, of Bangor, was the first lieutenant-colonel the regiment had, and was a brave fighter. George Varney, also of Bangor, entered the service as major, and his promotion to a brevet brigadier-general at the close of the war was an appropriate recognition of his efficiency, bravery, and perfect modesty. Among the line officers were others who rose to distinction. Daniel Chaplin, of Bangor, who was called a tiger in action, became colonel of the First Maine Heavy Artillery before he fell at the head of his men at Petersburg. Daniel Sargent, of Brewer, was another fine fighter who was killed at Richmond. Daniel White, of Bangor, of the same stuff, was a brevet brigadier-general at the end of the war. A. B. Farnham, of Bangor, went out a lieutenant and came back a lieutenant-colonel.

Mr. Hamlin was interested in the Second Maine for personal as well as patriotic reasons. It was organized within his home district, and he had seen many of its men grow up to manhood. It also typified the union between the patriotic Democrats and Republicans he advocated. He witnessed the departure of the regiment, and took part in the ceremonies which were held on Broadway in front of the First Parish Church. There was an immense concourse of people present. Miss Robena McRuer presented Colonel Jameson with the regimental colors, after which Mr. Hamlin made a brief speech, which the local newspapers described as an earnest and eloquent tribute to the people who had sprung to arms so promptly to defend the best government yet given to man, and as a patriotic vindication of the right of the government to suppress the rebellion. He also praised the adopted citizens who had taken arms, and said that their loyalty had been exceeded by none. He closed by saying: "It matters little when one throws off this mortal coil, but how and where is important, and at no time and at no place can a man better die than when and where he dies for his country and his race."

The Second marched off to the station with colors flying, and as the train rolled away, in one of the last views the soldiers caught of the old home was the Vice-President waving his hand to them while standing in the throng.

Both sides were now rapidly preparing for war, when Congress convened on the 4th of July for the extra session. This was a notable gathering of men. Among them were veteran leaders,—Chandler, Wade, Fessenden, Sumner, Hale, Sherman, Trumbull, Wilson, Collamer, Anthony, King, Clark, Grimes, Foot, Washburne, Stevens, Grow, Lovejoy, Bingham, Blair, Colfax, and others who have figured in



REPUBLICAN LEADERS IN CONGRESS OF 1861.





previous pages. Among the new members of the Senate were Timothy Howe, of Wisconsin, Ira Harris, of New York, Kinsley S. Bingham, of Michigan, and Lot M. Morrill, of Maine. Howe was another Maine man who had grown up with the great West. He was born in Livermore, and served in the legislature of Maine. He became one of Mr. Hamlin's closest friends after entering the Senate, and his high character and eminent ability made him a national leader. Senator Harris was a jurist of weight, and exercised influence in the Senate. Mr. Bingham was one of the leaders of the Republican party, but died at the close of this session, regretted by his party as a leader of strength. Mr. Morrill came to the Senate without having had any experience in Congress, but his solid qualities soon gained him a position of importance. In the House there were several new members with distinction before them. One was William Windom, who was to be senator from Minnesota and twice secretary of the treasury, and who was a lifelong friend of the Vice-President. Another was William D. Kelley, of Pennsylvania, who was to become father of the House and the apostle of protection. A third was William A. Wheeler, a coming Vice-President. John A. Logan was to leave the House to win renown as the brightest type of the volunteer soldier. Roscoe Conkling was to take his place among the greatest leaders of his party. Samuel Shellabarger, of Ohio, rapidly made his mark as a forceful speaker. Alexander H. Rice, a future governor of Massachusetts, and James Buffinton, Daniel W. Gooch, and John B. Alley of the same State were also among Mr. Hamlin's personal friends in this House.

President Lincoln's message to Congress signalized his determination to wage a vigorous war against the Confederacy and satisfied the impatient radicals. He asked Congress for at least 400,000 men and \$400,000,000. Congress gave him 500,000 men and \$500,000,000, and industriously prepared for the war. Mr. Hamlin, it need not be added, was in accord with this policy, and aided by personal influence whenever he could any measure designed by the administration to prosecute the rebellion. His official duties were practically limited to presiding over the Senate, and to use his own express language he felt "like the fifth wheel of a coach." His influence was, therefore, largely personal, and to a man of his activity it was more or less galling. Yet he soon found a compensation in the freedom of intercourse he began to enjoy with President Lincoln, who always welcomed him as a friend, and often sought his advice. On this point, Mr. Hamlin contributed an interesting reminiscence. He was asked in an interview with William R. Balch:—

"Your relations with Mr. Lincoln were very pleasant, were they not?"

"Entirely so," was the reply. "When I was elected to the vice-presidency they told me that there was a well-preserved tradition handed down, and it was so, that only one Vice-President had ever got along with the President. I said, 'Well, I don't know Mr. Lincoln, but I mean to be the second.' Van Buren was the first, and he had always amicable relations with Jackson. I meant that I would agree with Lincoln. And, indeed, there never was any trouble; anybody could get along with him. After I got into my office, I found out why the others did not get along; it was just as clear as a mathematical demonstration. The people, you see, think the Vice-President is somebody of importance, and naturally he has a certain weight of character in his party to get where he is. People come to him, therefore, with that idea in their heads. But he is really only a contingent somebody. He is president of the Senate, and will cast a party vote when it is necessary. This everybody knows. His only patronage is appointing his private secretary. There it ends, and the President never gives way in the least to his deputy. Consequently they clash, and that is the reason why they have never got on well together. But with Mr. Lincoln it was very easy. We had intimate relations, and he often consulted me. I was more radical than he. I was urging him; he was holding back on his problems, and he was the wiser probably, as events prove."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Lincoln's invitation to Mr. Hamlin to become a consulting member of his Cabinet was sincere, as every one well knows who understands Lincoln. Mr. Hamlin accepted in the same spirit, but it was natural that in the workings of official and unofficial relations the executive must sustain with various men, the former predominate, as they should. Human nature, too, would not order it otherwise. A cabinet officer in charge of a department whose functions are largely executive might value the advice of a friend, but would not long for it if pressed upon him by one whose relations with the Cabinet had been established by the President as of a personal and independent nature. One occupying this position, and, therefore, having no executive power, would hesitate to take an invitation to act with the Cabinet in a literal sense. The Vice-President regulates his relations with the President and Cabinet according to the footing on which he can place himself by means of his personal qualities, rather than by his official duties. Mr. Hamlin did attend numerous cabinet and military conferences at the White House during the first period of the war, because he had been given to understand that he was expected to do so. But this lack of executive power, as well as his respect for the rights of others, caused him in the end to confer directly with President Lincoln, and separately with the members of the Cabinet.

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Herald*, "Celebrities at Home," September 8, 1879.



Thus the nature of Mr. Hamlin's duties and the circumstances of his position compelled him to act chiefly in an individual capacity in relation to the war measures of the administration. But his well-known relations with President Lincoln, his desire to serve the government, his standing as a public man, and his own knowledge of military affairs, naturally drew many men to him, and the details of numerous conferences of this kind would be interesting reading if Mr. Hamlin had recorded them. His acts, however, are known, though no one ever learned how much criticism on President Lincoln he answered, or how many ill-advised plans he quietly side-tracked. He had letters of this nature from men whose names might astonish the public, and which it would be unjust to reproduce, since the authors mostly came to see their own mistakes. Thus it became known that while Mr. Hamlin often had to hear complaints against the administration, he was President Lincoln's friend and trusted counselor. The personal enemies of the baser sort whom great men attract see them through their own eyes, and form their opinions on suspicion and dislike, not on fact. But it is sufficient to say now that President Lincoln repeatedly manifested his confidence and friendship in acts that conclusively show how he felt towards his associate, while Mr. Hamlin, as will appear later, rendered President Lincoln a service that might be regarded as the most patriotic, certainly the most unselfish, act of his life.

When this session of Congress closed Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine, and during the remaining months that preceded the regular session he busied himself with the various duties that were presented. One was to keep alive the patriotic sentiment of the people, and involved participation in the state campaign. After the first glow of war excitement had passed away, there was a not unnatural cooling off in ardor, and the opponents of the administration, who were known as Copperheads, were not slow to seize the opportunity to make trouble. In Maine, the most active of this element were the same pestiferous group of pro-slavery Democrats who harassed Mr. Hamlin in his senatorial battles. Their organ was the "Bangor Democrat," which had called him a "false friend of the Union" in the contest of 1850, because he had opposed the extension of human slavery. This newspaper was conducted by one Emery, who in latter-day parlance would be called a "crank." But he and his supporters caused a great deal of trouble by charging the rebellion to the "Black Republicans," by calling the soldiers "Lincoln's hirelings," and by predicting that "no Democrat would be found to raise his arm against his brethren of the South." Emery's press was pitched into the street one day, and destroyed, but he himself was not harmed, and the only penalty his supporters had to pay was to cheer the flag in public. This was

to the honor of Bangor, and in marked contrast with the persecution of Union men at the South.

The Republicans reelected Governor Washburn by a handsome majority, while the war Democrats emphasized the loyalty of Maine by voting for Colonel Jameson as against a Copperhead candidate. After the election, the patriotic people of Maine bended their energies towards raising and equipping more troops. Union meetings were held. Mr. Hamlin spoke at one in Bangor on September 25, and the following extracts are presented to give the arguments of the day. He said:—

“There has been a great deal said about peace and a great deal about war. . . . I am for peace, and I am willing to fight for it. I am for peace, and I want it founded on that basis that shall not entail upon my children the necessity of again passing through this ordeal. I am for peace, but I want that peace that shall elevate us in the eyes of the world, and shall demonstrate that there is integrity and capacity enough in men for self-government. I want a peace, too, that shall give security for the gallant men in the rebel States who have come forward and sacrificed their fortunes and almost their lives at the altar of patriotism. I want to make a peace with your Johnsons and your Holts, and men of that class,—with men who are loyal to the country, not with rebels who have muskets in their hands. . . . The signs of the times augur for the right. Everywhere the Federal forces to support and maintain the Union are increasing and improving. Everywhere the signs indicate that the rebellion must, as it will, go to the wall.”

When Congress assembled in December, 1861, for the regular session the situation was more encouraging than it appeared, though there were grounds for discouragement. President Lincoln's policy of delay had borne good fruit in keeping Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, and parts of Virginia and Tennessee in the Union practically through the efforts of their own loyal people. Thus the party that had cried “No coercion,” and threatened to become a disintegrating factor in the Northern States, had comparatively little force on public opinion. General Scott had retired, to be succeeded by General George B. McClellan, who was to accomplish his great work of raising the magnificent Army of the Potomac. Moreover, a young officer, whose name was U. S. Grant, had pushed to the front in the West, and had captured Belmont, Missouri, and Paducah, Kentucky. But the disastrous battle of Ball's Bluff, in which the gallant Baker was sacrificed, hung over the country like a pall, while the lack of energy in the War Department discouraged the leaders in Congress. There was a mystery about Ball's Bluff, and it was believed in the inner circles at Washington that General Charles P. Stone, a gallant officer, whose name is now untarnished, was made the scape-

goat to shield one higher up in command. The famous Committee on the Conduct of the War was now formed, and Mr. Cameron left the War Department to become minister to Russia, where his offices were of great value to our government.

The accession of Stanton to the War Department followed the appointment of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, and coincidentally more energy and better organization marked the prosecution of the rebellion. Mr. Hamlin was drawn into the management of the war more than the public knew, and his views of the great figures of the day may, therefore, be of interest. He was brought into consultation with the members of the war committee, which was natural since Chandler, Wade, Julian, and Gooch were personal friends, and were of the aggressive and energetic stock he liked. He soon entertained close and confidential relations with Stanton, and was one of his strongest supporters. He saw in the great war secretary a true-hearted patriot, while his irritability was the natural outcry of a body and mind almost driven to death with work, and his brusqueness of manner was more of a refuge against intrusion on his duties than a characteristic expression of the man. He was profoundly religious. Probably he was a fatalist, and believed that as secretary of war he was fulfilling the mission of his life. If he let his fiery zeal carry him roughshod over men at times, it was because he chafed to save the Union. In a word, to quote Mr. Hamlin, "Stanton was the walking-beam of the ship of state," and next to Lincoln he cared more for Stanton as a man and officer than any other member of the war administration.

Mr. Hamlin became more interested in the army than the navy, partially through an unpleasant incident which compelled him to sever his connections with Secretary Welles. While it must be left to others to weigh the various estimates of Mr. Welles, it must be frankly recorded that Mr. Hamlin regretted his responsibility for Welles's appointment to the Cabinet as one of the mistakes of his life and not entirely on personal grounds. Yet he consoled himself in the reflection that the administration had in Gustavus V. Fox, the assistant secretary of the navy, a man who, in his judgment, should rank next to Stanton as the most useful and efficient officer of the administration. But Mr. Hamlin's differences with Secretary Welles grew out of a personal affair. It has been shown how Mr. Welles owed his appointment to the Cabinet to Mr. Hamlin. Some effort was once made to discredit this, and the animus of Mr. Welles's feeble reflections on Mr. Hamlin's attitude towards the administration is clear. But if there were any grounds for doubt, the words of President Lincoln remove them. When he came to Washington to be inaugurated, he once more talked with Mr. Hamlin about Mr. Welles. General



Charles Hamlin, the Vice-President's son, was present. Mr. Lincoln asked, "Do you still regard Welles as a better man than Banks?" His manner for raising the question was half apologetic, and yet he seemed to be in doubt. When Mr. Hamlin replied that he preferred Welles, Mr. Lincoln said, "Oh, very well, I told you that you should name the New England man, and if you say Welles, it is Welles."

Mr. Welles was profuse in his expressions of gratitude to Mr. Hamlin, and admitted his obligations to him. This closes the appointment of Mr. Welles to the Lincoln Cabinet, and makes his subsequent conduct his own affair. When the war broke out, the government among other things directed the Navy Department to build a number of wooden gunboats. Maine was then the great shipbuilding State of the Union. One of her leading shipbuilders was Captain William McGilvery, a patriotic citizen of Searsport. He was associated with General Samuel F. Hersey, who was one of the half a dozen leading lumbermen of the United States. They desired to obtain a contract for building some of these gunboats, and asked Mr. Hamlin to see Secretary Welles about it. He called on Mr. Welles, who said, "Certainly, Mr. Hamlin, certainly. The gentleman is in every way responsible, — that I know, — and he shall have the contract." "Then I can be assured that there will be no mistake about the matter?" said Mr. Hamlin. "Certainly, certainly; the contract will be awarded at once," was the reply of the secretary; and so the matter for the moment ended. Later, however, the Vice-President, learning that certain bureau officers had more to do with the awarding of contracts than the secretary himself, again went to Mr. Welles, informed him of this, and was again assured in the most positive manner that the contract would be awarded as arranged.

In the mean time Mr. Hamlin wrote Captain McGilvery and General Hersey that Secretary Welles had promised them the contract, and they began to prepare to build the gunboats. But a few days afterwards, to Mr. Hamlin's astonishment, it was announced that the contracts for building the vessels had been made without including McGilvery and Hersey. One contract had been given to Maine, and to a man who was in active sympathy with the rebels, and who had applied for the contract to make all the money he could, whereas McGilvery and Hersey, who were Union men, had made a low bid. Mr. Hamlin had a short but stormy interview with Mr. Welles. He asked for an explanation, and the secretary stammered out that his promise had escaped his mind. "Do you then not intend to keep your word, sir?" Mr. Hamlin asked sternly.

"No, sir, I cannot now," was the hesitating reply.

"Then this terminates our relations," said Mr. Hamlin; "I will

not have anything to do with a man who breaks his plighted word to me."

It transpired that Captain Fox was the virtual executive head of the Navy Department, and that he had disposed of these contracts without consulting Mr. Welles very much about it. But it was galling to Mr. Hamlin to experience this ingratitude, and to see a Copperhead have an opportunity to gouge money out of the government. He never thereafter spoke to Welles.

While the government had been pursuing a defensive military policy in the main, the immense energy that marked Stanton's accession to the War Department and the happy solution of the Trent affair served now to place President Lincoln in a clearer light to those who were beginning to understand his great powers. It has been well said that Mr. Lincoln armed himself like the warrior of old and strengthened himself surely at every point before he was ready to give battle royal. The apparent inactivity of the government had alarmed both reasonable and unreasonable people, but the latter were satisfied without much difficulty that the administration was proceeding safely, and in the solution of the Trent affair they had conclusive evidence that a strong, prudent, and far-seeing man was at the helm. President Lincoln's promptness to see that the capture of Mason and Slidell, the Confederate ambassadors to England and France, on a British steamer, was a violation of the principles on which we had gone to war with England in 1812, and his order to release them in the face of great opposition saved the United States from a war with Great Britain. Mr. Hamlin always spoke of this incident as a revelation of Mr. Lincoln's statesmanship, though it is of more interest to this narrative in showing how he began to incline against Secretary Seward and to regard him as an unsafe man, which is a story for another chapter.

When the new year came in, the government was prepared to enter on a vigorous campaign, and President Lincoln issued his famous order for a joint movement by land and sea against the insurgents. The subsequent victories at Fort Donelson and Roanoke Island, and the defeat of Sterling Price, expelled the Confederates from Tennessee and Missouri, and gained for our forces a footing in North Carolina. But while the Union thus made an immense headway, there was an unfortunate failure to take advantage of an opportunity presented and thrust home the victory that was won at Donelson. When the news came of Grant's capture of this highly important Confederate stronghold, Mr. Hamlin expressed the hope to his friends at Washington that Grant would be allowed to concentrate all available troops under his command and push his way without delay into the Southwest. The rebel forces which had been routed out of Tennessee

were retreating in a demoralized condition, and they could have been cut to pieces without much difficulty. Thus the war might have been ended in at least a year sooner than it was, and Mr. Hamlin hastened to lay before President Lincoln the suggestion to send Grant forward. But the President was passing through an agonizing ordeal at this moment; he was watching at the deathbed of a beloved son. Moreover, Mr. Lincoln's rare sense of courtesy would not allow him to interfere much with heads of departments, and he permitted General Halleck to exercise his authority.

The chief blame for this failure to follow up a golden opportunity falls on General Halleck. The generally accepted interpretation of the dispatches he exchanged with General Buell and others after the fall of Donelson was that he was chiefly concerned about his own chances of winning renown. His disposition to claim the credit of Donelson for himself and his ignoring of Grant were a point in evidence. But while Mr. Hamlin partially subscribed to this view, his knowledge of Halleck led him to another conclusion, and his frank nature would not permit him to deal in diplomatic phrases in expressing his opinion. As the Yankees would say: Mr. Hamlin sized Halleck up shortly, — in fact, at their first meeting. Halleck was a finely educated soldier, and perhaps one of the best military authorities in the country at the time. Yet his bullying nature and notoriously offensive manner rendered his hold on President Lincoln a mystery to many. It is now clear that Halleck served Mr. Lincoln chiefly as an instructor in military science, and when the pupil had practically surpassed the master, the latter became for a while the terrible Mr. Jorkins of the administration. Halleck's retention in command was one point on which Mr. Hamlin could not agree with Mr. Lincoln, although his courtesy would not allow him to press his ideas about Halleck on the President.

There was an encounter between Mr. Hamlin and General Halleck, shortly after the latter had been called to Washington, that was full of importance. The State of Maine was without adequate coast defenses, and the legislature, fearing that rebel pirates might break the blockade and ravage the coast of New England, caused the appointment of a commission to call the government's attention to the situation. The fortifications were in a wretched condition, and, moreover, they were without arms. Mr. Hamlin and Senator Fessenden were the commissioners, and were referred by the War Department to General Halleck. But if they had been plain citizens intruding themselves on General Halleck without the authority of a great State to present a reasonable request, they could not have been received more outrageously. Halleck cut them short with words as curt as his manner was insulting. Senator Fessenden said to a friend: —



"Hamlin's face grew black as a thunder-cloud. He came to his feet with all his weight, and said to Halleck, 'We expected to be treated like gentlemen at least, and have our State's request received with respect, whether it is granted or not.'

"Halleck almost collapsed at this shot," continued Senator Fessenden; "he literally sunk into his boots, and thenceforth treated us with the respect he had withheld in the beginning."

Seacoast defenses in New England were shortly after this constructed.

President Lincoln was now compelled to change his attitude towards the commanders of his armies and assume a responsibility that he was far from desiring. He was accused by military critics of "meddling" with General McClellan, but it is not necessary to say now how completely history has exonerated the great war President from "meddling" with the armies. The record of his official acts is a monument to his patience and a proof of his wonderful grasp of military duties. His kindness and fairness to General McClellan are unexampled. He gave McClellan the energetic support of his administration, and interfered only when actually forced to do so. The capture of Donelson and the victory at Roanoke Island were followed by the signal success of the Monitor over the Merrimac and Faragut's seizure of New Orleans. Thus, with the Mississippi River opened up, the Union cordon was being securely and firmly riveted around the Confederacy. But General McClellan remained inactive, and the Army of the Potomac accomplished little after the battle of Antietam. Congress adjourned, and Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine greatly depressed and convinced that McClellan was a failure.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### EMANCIPATION OF THE SLAVES

THE last chapter in the fall of the slave power presents an interesting coincidence in the lives of the war President and Vice-President. When Lincoln was a pilot of a Mississippi flatboat, and saw at New Orleans an auction of slaves, he said to John Hanks, "I would like to get a crack at that thing." When Hamlin was a struggling young law student, he said to General Fessenden, "I will fight slavery whenever I get a chance." After they entered public life, they worked along parallel lines, that is, they opposed slavery within purely constitutional limits, and it was the pursuance of that policy which placed the responsibility of the civil war on the shoulders of the slave power, overthrew the institution itself, and destroyed its dogma of secession. When they became President and Vice-President respectively, they were still working together towards a common end, which was the abolishment of slavery, and it may be added that while the crowning act of President Lincoln's life was the emancipation of the slaves, among the happy events of Mr. Hamlin's life was Mr. Lincoln's act in showing to him first of all men the immortal instrument that killed slavery on this continent and gave liberty to four millions of people.

When the slaveholders began war upon the government the paramount duty was to save the Union, and that was the slogan among the Northern masses. The moral effect of the outbreak of the rebellion on the pronounced anti-slavery leaders was to develop them into emancipators, and thus, while this issue was looming up, they were a unique group of advanced men, even among the shifting scenes of this fiery and tempestuous period. There was a marked difference of opinion at this time as to the support the Northern masses would give to emancipation, and it would be useless now to estimate it. The border state men naturally opposed it, as a rule the partisan Democrats were against it, and laboring men were at first alarmed lest the liberation of the slaves should tend to degrade their own condition. But the more intelligent among the multitude were now beginning to realize that slavery was the cause of the war, and that the logical outcome of the rebellion was its extinction. The fickle state of mind manifested by the public was another confusing factor.

After the battle of Bull Run the emancipators were certainly not as numerous as they were immediately after the attack on Sumter. The emancipators in Congress, however, were consistent and aggressive to the end. They worked tirelessly with President Lincoln, accepting or rejecting the details of his policy, but always for the same common purpose. Their fame is, therefore, unique and bright.

Mr. Hamlin was probably one of the first leaders of national influence to urge President Lincoln to free and arm the slave. The course he pursued towards the various measures before Congress relating to slavery illustrate his perfect independence and attitude towards Mr. Lincoln. He favored whatever plans he believed were right, and opposed whatever measures he regarded as wrong. He agreed with Mr. Lincoln against the radicals when he thought the President was right. He frankly disagreed with Mr. Lincoln and sided with the radicals when he believed they were right and the President was wrong. Mr. Lincoln always knew where Mr. Hamlin stood, and there never was any misunderstanding between them. The President often sent for the Vice-President to ask his opinions about policies and measures, and he was unfailingly interested and kind. They met as two friends who were seeking the same object, and who agreed or disagreed, as the case might be, but retained a respect and liking for each other. That is the kind of a man President Lincoln was, and he valued a frank, truthful friend who was not afraid squarely to dissent from him. He abhorred sycophants, and he would have been amazed if he could have heard the stories that adventurers and spies told, who preyed on their brief acquaintance with him, to injure his real friends and gain themselves an ear with the gallery. His acts show how he felt towards Mr. Hamlin.

Mr. Lincoln had a great advantage over his friends and critics aside from his remarkable personal qualities. He was President. Thus, he had all the means the government possessed of obtaining and weighing all authoritative information necessary to solve questions of state. The secrets of the government are all known only to one man, and he is its head. Moreover, Mr. Lincoln had to be President. While he could not always do as he desired, he was compelled to act as the executive, not as the individual. The conservatism of the office he held inclined him to move slowly in making an organic change in the body politic, and his singularly acute intuitive knowledge of the plain people led him to doubt the desirability of taking an advanced step with regard to slavery until he felt sure that he was in touch with the people, or would be vindicated by events. His lofty purpose, remarkable knowledge of human nature, foresight, and judgment were acknowledged by his fair critics, and it was here that another point arose causing an interesting difference



of opinion : whether he delayed at times solely through overcaution in his desire to march in the ranks of the multitude. Mr. Hamlin's mature judgment was that President Lincoln was more often right than his advisers, though in some instances he might have acted more promptly, his caution being the sole reason for delay.

The question of doubt was raised in regard to Mr. Lincoln's official attitude towards slavery in one important respect right after the outbreak of the rebellion. His conception of the war was that it was an insurrection, and that the Southern States still being in the Union, slavery was, therefore, protected by the Constitution. He hesitated to exercise the powers of war and overthrow the institution on this account, and also on account of the opposition emancipation would encounter from the border States, the laboring men of the North, the partisan Democratic leaders, and their sympathizers in the Union armies. But it is a matter of opinion whether he was as prompt as he should have been in initiating his attack on the institution of slavery. Thus, when the war began, and Mr. Lincoln was hedged in with delicate and difficult problems affecting the future of slavery, was he right in at first rejecting General Butler's doctrine that the runaway slave was a contraband of war? This is a concrete illustration of the radical charge that President Lincoln was slow, and his subsequent mastery of the slavery problem is other evidence in Mr. Hamlin's eyes of his remarkable growth while President.

When the war broke out slaves began to escape within the Union lines, and the problem was how to deal with them. The commanding officers acted at first according to their own ideas and wishes. Some returned the runaways ; others helped them North. With the border States in a precarious condition at this time, President Lincoln felt embarrassed, and yet the logical outcome of the situation cut the difficulties in which he was enmeshed, and freed him before he realized it. While he was perplexed over the attitude of the border States and the pro-slavery sentiment in the army, the quick wit of Butler saw the situation in its right light. Butler had been a dyed-in-the-wool pro-slavery man, and had voted for Jefferson Davis as his candidate in the Democratic convention at Charleston. He could not, therefore, be accused of entertaining abolition sentiments. He saw the rebels employing slaves on their fortifications, and also rebel officers demanding the return of runaways under the Fugitive Slave Law and the Constitution of the United States. Why, then, give these men up to have them used against the government? Why were they not contraband of war? There was no politics in this, no sentiment ; it was in accord with the rules of war. But Mr. Lincoln had been President only two months, and he did not seize the effective weapon placed at his disposal. The radicals do not appear to have received the credit due to them.

While Mr. Lincoln was hesitating, the progressive anti-slavery leaders in Congress were pressing him to enforce Butler's contraband doctrine. But he was inclined against it through his scrupulously exact ideas of his oath of office, and also through his fears of the border States. He had sworn to uphold the laws of the United States, and one was the Fugitive Slave Law. He feared that the border States would accuse him of breaking his pledges, and thus it was that he refused the weapon that Butler placed in his hands. Secretary Cameron wrote to Butler, approving his decision, but President Lincoln overruled him by causing General Scott to issue a private order to General McDowell on July 16, 1861, five days before the battle of Bull Run, to give up fugitive slaves who had crossed the Potomac with the army. This was known only to a few. In the order General Scott expressed the wish that "the name of the President should not at this time be brought before the public in connection with this delicate subject."<sup>1</sup> Yet it is hardly necessary to say that if Mr. Lincoln erred, it was solely on the side of caution, and the incident shows that if he did not do right, he was nevertheless true to his ideas of consistency in a trying moment when he was slowly but surely reaching a secure position. Congress, however, forced the President to change his ground, and history must give the radicals the credit for this.

The first authentic record of Mr. Hamlin's acts in connection with the slavery issue after the outbreak of the rebellion shows that the battle of Bull Run had the effect of stiffening the backbone of the genuine radicals. The day after this defeat Vice-President Hamlin and Senators Chandler and Sumner called on President Lincoln, urging him to exercise the full powers of war and free and arm the slaves.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hamlin argued on this and other occasions that these measures were now a war necessity, and were justified by the act of the slaveholders in rebelling against the government. He quoted John Quincy Adams as his authority and maintained that slavery was the cause of the war, and was the backbone of the Confederacy. It would remain a source of aid to the rebel government as long as it was allowed to exist, and to free the slaves would plunge the South into confusion and help topple the Confederacy to the ground. But in adopting this drastic policy, he would free the slaves under the strictest military discipline, in order to guard against uprisings of the blacks and possible injuries to helpless women and children. He insisted that the negro would make a good soldier, and predicted that good officers could be found to command them. Finally, he commended Butler's contraband doctrine as a double-edged sword, that would cut the difficulties

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lincoln*, by Nicolay and Hay, vol. iv. p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Zachariah Chandler*, p. 253.



which hedged in the administration and give the institution itself a mortal thrust.<sup>1</sup>

Although President Lincoln did not agree with Mr. Hamlin's views at this time, he was interested in all he had to say, often sent for him, and always paid him that gracious, kindly, personal attention that marked the nobleman of nature. He knew what the radicals were saying, and yet he met their criticism with tact and infinite good nature. The interviews he had with Mr. Hamlin were suffused with so much geniality, sincerity, and good sense that the Vice-President generally left him with his personal liking for Mr. Lincoln one of the uppermost things in his mind. But Mr. Lincoln was not yet understood, and Secretary Seward supposed that he himself was the actual power in the administration. This is easy to comprehend now, because Mr. Lincoln was unlike any other man who had been called on to lead the people of the United States. His ways were original, and they had to be understood in order to appreciate the man himself. Mr. Hamlin's intercourse with President Lincoln soon enabled him to perceive that the queer way this new leader had of asking questions and supposing hypothetical cases was after all only a method he employed of raising all objections to a question he would have to answer. But many radicals in their impatience thought that Lincoln was weak, though their public criticism was that he was slow. Mr. Hamlin thought that he was slow at first, which was natural because he was working into the presidency, while in the end he loomed up as a unique and very great man.

While it cannot be asserted that the call Mr. Hamlin, Mr. Chandler, and Mr. Sumner made on the President was in accord with a definite plan of action resolved on by the radicals to press the administration to action on the contraband question, it is morally

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin's personal opinion of the negro was that he was brave, docile, patient, and generous by nature. History showed that the negro had been a good soldier, and the record he made in the war of independence ought to have satisfied the country of his fighting qualities. His remarkable fortitude in slavery and daring when a fugitive were more convincing examples and nearer at hand. Mr. Hamlin told his son Charles that at this interview, and on other occasions, he fortified his views of the negro by quoting from Daniel O'Connell in his address of October 11, 1843, to the Cincinnati Irish Repeal Association. One extract was: "Your important allegation is that the negroes are a naturally inferior race. That is a totally gratuitous assertion upon your part. In America you can have no opportunity of seeing the negro educated. On the contrary, in most of your States it is a crime. Sacred Heaven! A crime to educate even a free negro! How, then, can you judge of the negro race when you see them despised and condemned by the educated classes, reviled and looked down on as inferior. The negro race has naturally some of the finest qualities. They are naturally gentle, generous, humane, and very grateful for kindness. They are as brave and as fearless as any other of the races of human beings."



certain that this was the case. Senator Trumbull, of Illinois, had already framed his bill, which was the first law passed by Congress to help slaves obtain their freedom. This was an act to confiscate slaves who were used in the insurrection against the government. It was placed on the senate calendar the day before Bull Run, and first called up the day after that defeat. The coincidence is, therefore, at least suggestive, if not conclusive, that Mr. Hamlin and the radical senators made a last appeal to the President to enforce the contra-band doctrine. But he was opposed to it, though he gave his reluctant official approval when Congress acted against his wishes. He desired Congress to wait for his lead in the slavery problem, and feared that this act would precipitate trouble in the border States. But, to quote Mr. Blaine, "he could not, however, veto the bill, because that would be equivalent to declaring that the Confederate army might have the full benefit of the slave population as military force."<sup>1</sup>

This is a concrete illustration of the relations between President Lincoln and his radical friends in Congress, and in another way is an illustration of the manner in which the executive and Congress threshed out the slavery question together. The right kind of men in Congress and the President working towards the same object impelled or checked each other from time to time. When the President was slow, Congress lent the necessary impetus, and when it went too far he checked it. Thus they supplemented each other, though in the end Lincoln towered up as the wisest of all. But in the beginning the radicals should have recognition for spurring the administration in the right direction. Mr. Lincoln had been President only a few months; he had always been an advocate, and was not accustomed to the wielding of great executive power. This was one of several incidents that developed in him a necessity for action, and it came largely from his party friends, such as Mr. Trumbull and Mr. Hamlin. His fears about the border States in this instance were well grounded, though not wholly justified. The confiscation act did not change the relations of these States to the government, while it materially paved the way for solving the negro problem. In consequence of the passage of this act, by the end of the summer of 1861 slaves were received into the Union armies, where they proved their usefulness, helped overcome the prejudice against negro soldiers, and thus prepared for the enlistment of the colored man.

The confiscation act broke the ice, so to speak, and if it seriously disarranged President Lincoln's plans, he soon adjusted himself to the situation and took the reins of power in his hands. Only he himself knew when he began to formulate in his mind his comprehensive

<sup>1</sup> *Twenty Years of Congress*, vol. i. p. 343.

plans for freeing the slaves, although it is not necessary to say that this wise and far-seeing man knew full well that the extinction of the institution would be the logical outcome of the defeat of the rebellion. He conceived a scheme in which there was no detail wanting, and which was worthy of his heart and head. But he desired to develop it in accordance with his judgment, and eventually succeeded in spite of partisan and even party opposition. While his course in countermanding General Fremont's proclamation of emancipation in Missouri and his suppression of Secretary Cameron's suggestion of arming the negroes evoked much bitter criticism, all this was in accordance with his plan, and it therefore had the greater moral effect in the end. When Congress came together in the winter of 1861, Mr. Lincoln was then prepared to present a definite course of action, which now shines out as an exemplification of his admirable statecraft. In this instance Mr. Hamlin is to be found closer to Mr. Lincoln than probably any one else, and working on nearly the same lines with him.

Mr. Lincoln's plan was gradual emancipation, and it was somewhat tentative. The first steps involved the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the colonization of those set free by this act, the prohibition of the institution in the territories, and the granting of compensation to those States that would emancipate their bondmen. At the same time President Lincoln held in his hands the war power as his thunderbolt to hurl at the institution in case this plan did not succeed. This was supported by the radicals generally as a step in the right direction, though they favored immediate abolition. In their private judgment, however, some of their ablest leaders had strong doubts about the feasibility of the compensatory feature. They were wise men, and knew human nature. They had sat in Congress with slaveholders, and knew that they placed a value on slavery above financial considerations. It was the source of their political, social, and pecuniary power. Union men of the border States were slaveholders, and they had not yet come to the opinion that slavery was the cause of the war. But the radicals supported the President, and history must judge that their private view was vindicated by the defeat of this plan.

Mr. Hamlin ardently supported President Lincoln's plan in all its details with the exception of the colonization feature. He presided over the Senate during the deliberations, and when the bill was passed exterminating slavery at the national capital he doubtless thought of one of his early speeches in the House, when he said he hoped that he might see the day when all who were men and lived in the District of Columbia would have the right of citizenship. But he was more especially interested in the compensatory idea, and rendered

all the service within his power to accomplish its success. While he may have had his doubts as to the willingness of the border States to surrender the institution for money, he was strongly of the opinion that the effort should be made, because he believed that the border States should have the opportunity to recoup themselves for the sacrifice, and also because the President ought to be supported. An old friend said that Mr. Hamlin's own generous nature would incline him to compensation, and that with Mr. Lincoln he would naturally favor any honorable agreement whereby Union slaveholders would be reimbursed. But they cut off their noses to spite their faces, so to speak, and some of their representatives in Congress managed by extreme tactics to defeat this generous measure. The colonization scheme did not amount to much. To quote Mr. Hamlin, he "took no stock in it." The freedmen refused to try it, and that was the end of it.

This legislation was completed practically within a year after Mr. Lincoln had become President, and it may be said to have been a period of momentous results without even reference to the progress of the war. The result of more interest to this volume was that these incidents served to draw Mr. Hamlin into closer relations with Mr. Lincoln, which enabled him to form a better estimate of the latter. Men then did not possess the gift of divination, and Mr. Hamlin had to watch the development of the President's policy to understand the development of the man himself. The numerous incidents that came under the Vice-President's observation — such as the pressure placed on the President to change his course, his firm and unswerving adherence to his purposes, his careful and adroit management of his policy to avoid the Scylla of party opposition on the one hand and the Charybdis of party opposition on the other, his invariable attitude of kindly patience under unmerited censure, and his good-naturedly shrewd replies to critics — were side lights that helped bring out the picture of the man himself. But the more important result of Mr. Lincoln's policy in connection with this point, in Mr. Hamlin's opinion, was that it marked both his attack on slavery and his ascendancy over Congress. For he was now swerving that body to the purposes of his great will.

Mr. Lincoln had now become more confidential in his interviews with Mr. Hamlin regarding his plans, as important incidents to be related will show. At the same time, it is to be emphasized that he always spoke with caution, and rarely committed himself unreservedly to any line of action. While he would listen to all Mr. Hamlin had to say and would ply him with questions about important subjects, he would not, as a rule, say what he thought in direct terms, or announce plainly what he intended to do. But upon ques-



tions that did not relate to the problems he was weighing in his mind he would talk freely as one old friend would to another, and he was the most delightful of men in moments of this kind. Mr. Hamlin thought that Mr. Lincoln sometimes made up his stories on the spur of the moment, which in a measure accounted for their peculiarly apropos nature. They were also humorous, wholesome, and clean. This view Mr. Hamlin had of President Lincoln is elaborated because it is a picture of the true Lincoln, and is presented again to warn the unwary against a lot of humbugs who called themselves "confidential friends" or "advisers" of Lincoln, and who did not scruple to put words and stories in his mouth he never uttered. Mr. Hamlin knew the real Lincoln: he was a wise, discreet man, whose confidences were few, and the more valuable on that account.

When the summer of 1862 came with the rebellion yet unchecked, and Congress still refusing to adopt the compensatory emancipation plan, President Lincoln was now forced to consider abolition and the arming of the negroes. He reached his decision with reluctance, but the situation was urgent, and the behavior of the representatives of the border States had released him from longer pressing on them his generous and honorable terms. When Mr. Lincoln decided on his course, Vice-President Hamlin was the first to learn of it, and in a manner related by himself. One day in the latter part of this session of Congress, he made up his mind to make a short visit at his home in Bangor, and called upon Mr. Lincoln to announce his intention. While they were chatting, Mr. Hamlin happened to say that he was going to leave Washington that night for Maine. A smile came over President Lincoln's face, and he said in a significant way:

"No, you don't intend to do anything of the sort."

"Oh yes, but I do," replied Mr. Hamlin, not quite understanding.

"No," rejoined Mr. Lincoln, "you do not intend anything of the sort; in fact, Mr. Vice-President, you will not leave Washington at present."

Mr. Hamlin at once saw that the President had something in mind of unusual importance, and said:—

"Of course I will not think of doing so if you wish otherwise. You are the commander-in-chief, and I am under orders."

"And I order you to sit in that chair," continued the President, laughing; "and afterwards to ride with me to supper."

In a short time the President and Vice-President, escorted by a file of soldiers, rode horseback out to the Soldiers' Home, which Mr. Lincoln used as a summer residence. After supper President Lincoln invited Vice-President Hamlin into his library, and after locking the door, said:—

"Mr. Hamlin, you have been repeatedly urging me to issue a



• LINCOLN READING THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION TO HAMLIN.





proclamation of emancipation freeing the slaves. I have concluded to yield to your advice in the matter and that of other friends, — at the same time, as I may say, following my own judgment. Now listen to me while I read this paper. We will correct it together as I go on."

While saying this, Mr. Lincoln opened a drawer in his desk and took therefrom the first draft of the military proclamation freeing four millions of slaves.

The President and Vice-President then sat down, and Mr. Lincoln slowly read the instrument over to his associate, after which he asked for criticism and suggestions.

"There is no criticism to be made," Mr. Hamlin replied.

"Oh yes, there is; at least, you can make some suggestions," answered Mr. Lincoln, laughingly, and he repeated his invitation.

"Finally," said Mr. Hamlin in his account of this famous interview, "I did make, I believe, three suggestions, two of which Mr. Lincoln accepted."<sup>1</sup>

But this comprised the entire account he would give, and those who knew him can well understand and appreciate his motives in withdrawing into the background. One who knew Mr. Hamlin said that the man reflected himself when he explained his unwillingness to give more details of this interview by saying, "The Emancipation Proclamation was Lincoln's own act, and no one else can claim any credit whatever in connection with it."<sup>2</sup>

The next logical step was to arm the colored men, but Mr. Lincoln still hesitated to do this, and with good reason. While the development of the slave into a soldier was one of the important outcomes of the war and an upward step in his life, it is not easy now to realize the extent and prejudice against the colored soldier at the outset. It is easy, however, to understand why there should be feeling against him and doubts of his fighting capacity. It required a war to open the eyes of the Northern people to the dangers of slavery, and it was not until the rebellion had existed a year or more that the majority began to see that slavery was the cause of the war. They had regarded the doctrine of secession as the cause, whereas it was an out-

<sup>1</sup> This original draft was destroyed by fire in Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> This interview took place on June 18, 1862, or more than a month before Mr. Lincoln informed his Cabinet of his intention to issue a proclamation of emancipation. On July 22 the Cabinet learned that it had been written. Mr. Hamlin, in the mean time, had arrived in Bangor on June 21, according to the Bangor newspapers. See *Congressional Globe* of June 19, 1862, for his letter to the Senate informing it of his intention to absent himself on that day, p. 2798, 2d session of Senate of the 37th Congress, part iii. This record of dates proves that Mr. Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation earlier than the historians have hitherto supposed.

come of the institution, — a heresy that had been evolved to defend slavery. If slavery had been early extinguished, the Virginia slaveholders would have had no reason for proposing secession in the first instance in 1795 as a final safeguard for their institution. But the people were now beginning to see that slavery was the root of the evils that had come to the country, and that to arm the slave was to strike it a vital blow. Yet many a gallant Union officer who had not seen the light declared disdainfully that he would not fight for Abolitionists, or be a military slave master. At the same time the foolish Democratic partisan leaders and newspapers, to add fuel to the fires of prejudice had kindled, yelled that it was "Abe" Lincoln's war, or the "Black Republicans' war." The final interviews Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin held on this subject are interesting and characteristic. They both agreed that with the advantages of discipline the negro would probably make a good soldier, and they both believed that the time was coming when the government would enlist him. But when would the time come, and how could the obstacles of prejudice against the colored man as a soldier be overcome? The McClellan issue was now involving the administration and its supporters in a wrangle with this general and his followers who were opposed to arming the negro, and the situation was becoming more and more perplexing. In passing it may be said that Mr. Hamlin had already lost faith in McClellan, though this is a story for another chapter. He advised the President to cut the knot of difficulties by dismissing McClellan and other officers who allowed themselves to meddle with questions of state. Their duty, he argued, was to be soldiers, not politicians; to obey their commander-in-chief, not to question his acts. But circumstances that were beyond Mr. Lincoln's control were giving this issue a political cast, and generous and patient as he had been with McClellan, he could not now afford to take a step that might give his opponents a weapon to use against him.

When the project of arming the colored men was discussed among the friends of the administration, Mr. Hamlin set about quietly to ascertain the sentiments of young and ambitious Union officers of his acquaintance. There were several who were peculiarly close to him, for two were his elder sons, and a third was the son of his friend and neighbor, John Appleton, the distinguished chief justice of Maine. Mr. Hamlin's sons enlisted in 1862. Charles, the elder, went out as major of the Eighteenth Maine, and Cyrus as captain and aide on the staff of General Fremont. John F. Appleton was one of the college friends and associates of the Hamlin brothers. He was of that type of the American college man and soldier exemplified in Charles Russell Lowell, Robert Gould Shaw, and Theodore Winthrop. While Major Charles Hamlin favored the enlistment of the negroes, he

preferred what proved to be a more active service in the field, and remained in the Army of the Potomac as adjutant-general of Hooker's division. Both Captain Hamlin who had served in West Virginia, and Captain Appleton who had been sent farther south, saw enough of the negro to convince them that he had good fighting qualities, and knowing the opinions of the Vice-President they wrote him freely. Captain Hamlin was by nature ardent and enthusiastic, and when he made up his mind to carry an undertaking through he embraced it with all his energies.

In the mean time Mr. Hamlin again talked with Mr. Lincoln about the necessity of arming the negroes, and laid before him the letters he had received from his son and Appleton. He said to Mr. Hamlin, "I do not think that the people are yet up to it," and intimated that this was the chief obstacle. But an incident happened soon after this that decided President Lincoln that the time had come, and that Mr. Hamlin was right. About ten o'clock one night in January, 1863, Captain Cyrus Hamlin entered his father's rooms at Washington in company with eight or ten officers of his acquaintance and of subordinate positions. Captain Hamlin had ascertained that they were willing to take command of colored troops, and had urged them to call with him on his father to ask him to use his influence with President Lincoln to that end. Mr. Hamlin was much impressed when he heard the object of his visitors' call, and said that he and Secretary Stanton had long urged President Lincoln to take this step, but that they had failed to convince him that the time was ripe. He asked this question, "Would you, and other men like you, be willing to accept the same command in colored troops you now hold?"

"Yes, sir, gladly," was the general reply.

This was proof enough to satisfy even the opponents of the negro soldier that the movement was patriotic and disinterested, and he replied:—

"Very well, if you are willing to undertake the task, I will see to it that you have an opportunity of presenting your views to the President," and he forthwith sent a messenger to Mr. Lincoln informing him that he would call at the White House the next morning at nine o'clock on important business. Mr. Lincoln answered that he would make the engagement, and with characteristic caution Mr. Hamlin enjoined on the officers the importance of presenting themselves to him "at a quarter to nine sharp." He added: "Mr. Lincoln is a busy man, and we must not detain him a minute longer than necessary, nor keep him waiting at all."

Mr. Lincoln met Mr. Hamlin and the officers at the appointed hour. Mr. Hamlin announced the object of the visit, and also said that the officers had volunteered to accept positions of equal rank



among colored troops. President Lincoln was both surprised and moved. He had had no intimation of the nature of Mr. Hamlin's visit, and undoubtedly he was touched when he heard the Vice-President offer the services of his own son and those of other young officers in a cause that had aroused the strongest feelings of racial prejudice. His words show this. He first questioned Captain Hamlin and his comrades one by one to obtain their individual views, and then turning to Mr. Hamlin he asked :—

"What is your best judgment about this?"

"I think," was the reply, "that these gentlemen are entirely right. If they are ready to move,—if they and other good men like them are ready to give up their present positions and take places in negro regiments,—I am sure it is but right that you should give them authority to do so."

"Yes, yes," said President Lincoln three or four times, "I suppose the time has come. Gentlemen," he continued, "I say to you freely that your visit has determined me finally to do what my dear friend Hamlin has urged me to do,—to arm the blacks, and I will write an order to the Secretary of War to form such an organization as may be necessary at once."

Mr. Hamlin asked Mr. Lincoln whether he would not write the order at once. The President assented, and, sitting down at his desk, he rapidly penned an order to Secretary Stanton to form a brigade of colored men, to be officered by white men, and directing him to remember the men Mr. Hamlin would introduce to him.

"May I be your messenger to Secretary Stanton?" eagerly asked Mr. Hamlin.

"Yes, yes," replied the President, smiling in his own quaint way, "take it to Stanton; take it to Stanton. I am glad to know that you are both satisfied."

Without a moment's delay the Vice-President hurried to the War Department, found the secretary in his private room, introduced the officers, and told him the news.

"No, no, it can't be possible!" exclaimed Stanton, with suppressed excitement, hardly daring to believe that one of his pet schemes was about to go into effect.

"Here is the President's order," was Mr. Hamlin's simple response. Hastily the secretary read it, was silent for a moment, and then, throwing aside his usual gruffness of manner, his real feeling came to the surface. Great tears welled up in his eyes and flowed over his careworn face. Then convulsively throwing his arms about Hamlin, he cried out with all the earnestness of a deep, strong nature, "Thank God for this! Thank God for this!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This incident is also contained in Carroll's *Twelve Americans*.

Mr. Stanton then assured the officers that the order should be issued without delay, and that they should be remembered. They reported that they were willing to take the same ranks they were then holding, but the thankful secretary warmly asserted "that would not do at all," and virtually announced his intention of assigning them all to higher commands. Mr. Stanton was as good as his word, and the Ullmann brigade was soon organized, with the officers who were partially responsible for it in higher commands. While the Ullmann brigade was a failure in its formative stage, it was, after all, another illustration of the old adage, "A poor beginning makes a good ending." The appointment of General Ullmann was also a practical illustration of the peculiar political difficulties the government often had to contend with in organizing its military strength. General Ullmann was the Know-Nothing candidate for governor of New York in 1854, and the element he represented demanded recognition. To satisfy it, Secretary Stanton placed Ullmann in command, and he recruited the brigade. The mistakes made were stepping-stones to success, and when the colored troops were placed on the right footing, they amply vindicated all expectations and proved their usefulness. There were nearly 300,000 colored soldiers in the Union army before the close of the war, and their record is an honor to their race.

While this volume is not required to review further the employment of colored soldiers, it would not be complete without the presentation of a few more details to show the interest Mr. Hamlin took in this important departure. Captain Cyrus Hamlin assisted General Ullmann in mustering in the officers appointed. Two regiments were officered by men appointed from Maine regiments. Captain Hamlin was appointed the colonel of one, Captain Appleton, colonel of the other. A third regiment in the brigade was assigned to the command of Captain Henry G. Thomas, of Portland, Maine; H. C. Merriam, I. S. Bangs, Samuel C. Hamblen, and others also of Maine, received appointments in this brigade. Five regiments composed the Ullmann brigade, and they were mustered in in March, 1863, and embarked on April 10 for New Orleans. Colonel Hamlin was in command of the Eightieth Regiment, and after serving in the Department of the Gulf, was appointed on December 3, 1864, brevet brigadier-general, and on March 13, 1865, he was brevetted major-general of volunteers. He remained in New Orleans after the war, and it was believed that the Republican party of Louisiana intended to nominate him for governor in 1867, but when the convention assembled the news came that General Hamlin had been seized with yellow fever. He died after a short illness. Mr. Hamlin could never reconcile himself to the loss of his magnetic and promising son. Cyrus seemed constantly to be in his thoughts in the twilight of his old age.

Colonel Appleton achieved distinction at the siege of Port Hudson, where he led a charge against the Confederate works. His soldierly bearing at the moment when he stood alone in the presence of the enemy won the admiration of friend and foe alike, and was regarded as a manifestation of remarkable bravery and coolness. A Confederate officer who witnessed the incident afterwards said that he could not bear to see a young man so brave and calm die, and ordered his men not to fire. Colonel Appleton was brevetted for his services, and appointed by President Grant United States district judge for the Eastern District of Texas, but his failing health prevented his taking office, and he died in 1874. Thomas, who entered the army as a private in the Fifth Maine, took command of the Second United States Colored Troops in February, 1863, and rose rapidly in rank. He was brevetted many times for his services, and was highly esteemed as a soldier of unusual bravery in the field and efficiency in organizing. He finally attained the rank of brigadier-general, and at the close of the war remained in the regular army. Bangs preceded Colonel Hamlin in the command of his regiment, and was afterwards brevetted a general for his faithful service and sterling soldierly qualities. Merriam was another fine officer who justified Mr. Hamlin's faith in him. He remained in the regular army, and at the outbreak of the war with Spain, in May, 1898, President McKinley appointed him a major-general. These were men who did not fear ostracism in the face of duty.

There were other incidents that showed Mr. Hamlin's interest in the uplifting of the negroes and their gratitude to him. One more must suffice. This was of a rather touching nature. There were some poor refugees living at Victoria, Vancouver Island, who sought with their hard-earned means to aid their race in their struggle upward. Among them were some women who formed a committee, with Emily Allen as president, to raise money to this end. They succeeded in obtaining six hundred dollars, which is to be reckoned a large sum, considering the circumstances of those who contributed it. The money was sent to Mr. Hamlin, with the request that he should disburse it in Beaufort, South Carolina, for the benefit of the contrabands there, since Beaufort was the place where the first colored regiment was organized "according to law." The communication closed: "Will you please accept our thanks as a people for the great interest you have taken in the cause of humanity; and though many miles divide us from those who have the burden to bear in this great struggle for human liberty, our hearts are with you even to death."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin forwarded the money to General Rufus Saxton, the military governor of the Department of the South,

<sup>1</sup> *New York Tribune*, June 2, 1863.



who rendered highly important services in this and other capacities. General Saxton cordially accepted all missions Mr. Hamlin asked him to perform. His reminiscences, in a letter to the author dated April 20, 1898, are interesting and to the point :—

“I well remember the patriotic and statesmanlike interest he [Mr. Hamlin] always manifested in all matters pertaining to the freedom of the Department of the South and in the organization of colored troops, and there can be no doubt but what his action hastened the President's order to Mr. Stanton for their arming. . . . I can well remember the sorrow we all felt at the fatal blunder which the party made in placing Andrew Johnson in Hannibal Hamlin's place, and how the party was led to repentance in sackcloth and ashes. Mr. Hamlin never failed to give the unqualified support of his great name to the work of the freedmen in the Department of the South under my charge.”

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### MR. HAMLIN'S PART IN THE WAR

WHEN Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine after he had seen the Emancipation Proclamation he found the political pendulum on its backward swerving, and he gave his services in a campaign of unique interest. But it is first necessary to outline the variety of causes that had started this reactionary movement against the administration. The generally accepted explanation of the Republican reverses in the election of 1862 is that they were primarily due to the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued in September. But is this wholly true? The nation was engaged in a tremendous struggle for existence, and the government had failed thus far to put an end to it. No matter how colossal the difficulties were, the mortifying fact stared the North in the face, that with its twenty millions of people and practically unlimited resources it had as yet failed, after a year's fighting, to suppress an insurrection among eight millions of people, who were blockaded out of intercourse with their foreign sympathizers, and were restricted as to resources. All this militated against the government, and it must also be remembered that the administration was not entirely without blame. After the capture of Fort Donelson and other victories in the early spring of 1862, "the ill-advised resolution was taken of putting a stop to volunteer recruiting on the 3d of April. As the waste of the armies went on without corresponding successes, the error which had been committed was recognized, and recruiting was renewed in June."<sup>1</sup> The administration shared the popular delusion after Donelson that the end of the war was near, and the fierce continuation of the conflict and failure of the Union arms contributed to turn the tide against it long before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued.

Thus, one explanation of Republican reverses in the election of 1862 was the fact that the people were losing confidence in the administration. It is certainly pertinent to ask whether a continuation of Union victories after Donelson would not have given the election to the Republicans. But the military record of the year was more unfavorable than favorable to the Union cause, and discouragement was the obstacle that the Republican leaders had to contend with from the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Lincoln*, by Nicolay and Hay, vol. vii. p. 2.

beginning. In the midst of the campaign came the draft, and while conscription was lawful, and an absolute necessity at this time, the government could not have committed a more unpopular act. Although the conscripting was not general, but was confined to certain States, the thing itself gave the malignant Copperhead element a chance to charge "despotism" against "Abe" Lincoln's administration, and to prey on the fears of the multitude. Finally, the want of confidence the Republican party found within its own ranks was openly expressed by Horace Greeley in his ill-timed and impatient outburst in August, which he called the "prayer of twenty millions of people." Thus, the Republican party was divided, and furthermore it was weakened by the loss of thousands and thousands of its followers who were at the front. In view of these facts, the Emancipation Proclamation may be looked on as a contributory cause to the defeat of the administration in 1862, but not as the primal cause; and it could have been issued with safety after the capture of Donelson.

Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine realizing the desperate nature of the campaign before the Republican party. He was urged to speak in other States, and advised by his friends to keep himself more in the public eye. But he judged it best for him to remain in Maine, and do all within his power to keep the Pine Tree State at the head of the column of the loyal States that were to follow her. A defeat in Maine at this critical stage might have precipitated a general rout in the other Northern States, and utterly demoralized the supporters of the administration. Mr. Hamlin, therefore, gave his services to his party, and worked as vigorously among the people as he ever had before. The Republicans nominated as their candidate for governor Abner Coburn, whose noble and wisely bestowed philanthropies place him among the public benefactors of his day. The Copperhead element of the Democracy selected Bion Bradbury as their candidate, while the war Democrats, to signify their displeasure at Bradbury's nomination, once more called on General Jameson to rebuke the Copperhead sentiment in their party. General Jameson consented to lead their ticket, though he was now in his last illness, and contributed a service in his dying hours which was among the most patriotic acts of his life.

Mr. Hamlin was peculiarly situated. Knowing that the patient President was only waiting a decisive Union victory to strike a death-blow at slavery, the attacks on Mr. Lincoln were all the more painful to him since he himself could say nothing to lessen the storm of criticism that was beating on the President's head. Once when Mr. Lincoln was asked why he did not take the public more into his confidence, he replied significantly that there were times when the public would have to take him on trust. Mr. Hamlin had to follow about the



same line, and in his speeches in this campaign he virtually asked the people of Maine, who had long known him, to trust him as the sponsor for the President. Thus, at a great meeting at Bangor, on the 4th of July, he said: "You may sometimes suppose, far away from the heat of conflict, that a certain policy is wrong, and ask why another course may not be adopted. But we must have patience and hope. I want to impress the fact upon you that we have at the head of the nation a man of distinguished ability and unsurpassed integrity. You may repose in him the most implicit confidence. His efforts to preserve this government will be all that you can ask, and will be successful; and I am rejoiced to know that he has the generous confidence of our people which he so freely and justly deserves."

There was another important meeting at Bangor on July 27 to encourage enlistment. Mr. Hamlin's speech was one of many that must be judged by the peculiar circumstances under which they were delivered. He knew that emancipation was coming, that conscription was necessary, and finally, that General McClellan, not President Lincoln, was the cause of delay in suppressing the rebellion. Yet he could not, considering the general tension of feeling, speak out his full mind, and he had, therefore, to address the multitude in words and phrases that would bring them to the right conclusion without his revealing his information. While this speech was imperfectly reported, often leaving sentences jerky and unfinished, nevertheless it is worth reproducing in order to illustrate the method of address Mr. Hamlin had to adopt in this emergency. He was more anxious to reach men who could carry only a few ideas than to deliver a polished effort for posterity to read. This accounts for the somewhat rough joke at his own expense in reference to the employing of "men blacker than himself" as soldiers. His purpose was to clear away the prejudice against the negro, and show that it was a necessity to arm him. He clinched this idea in the minds of the crowd by the method described. He said:—

"We receive the blessings of nourishment so common without appreciating them. So with our government. We have not appreciated its blessings. We owe everything we have for the protection of the government, and in return we have a right to its protection. I know the goodness and devotion of the man who is the chief ruler of the country to the people. He will look simply to your good. I have a right to demand of you a more vigorous prosecution of the war. When the ship of state is rocked in the tempest, all should throw aside partisanship and come to the rescue. I say we want to send forth no Federal bayonets to protect rebel property. We don't fight the rebels to save their property. We want to save our men as much as possible if it is done by men a little blacker than I am. I wish my voice could reach the officials at Washington. They are slow to

move, but they must come to that position where they will seize everything to our advantage.<sup>1</sup> We want to show Europe that we will come up fully to sustain this government. If we cannot get enough men voluntarily, we must draft enough. We have a country to preserve. This contest is to test the virtue of Republican government. I invoke every one to look at the responsibility resting on him at this crisis, and swear to support the great cause of free institutions, or die in their defense."

The result of the Maine election shows how strongly the tide was running against the Republican party before the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued. Coburn was chosen governor by the small plurality of less than 4000 votes, while the year before Governor Washburn was reelected by nearly 14,000 plurality. A comparison of figures is instructive and interesting. In 1861, under pressure of the war feeling, Washburn received 58,689 votes; Dana, the regular Democratic nominee, only 19,801; while Jameson, the war Democratic candidate, had 21,935. In 1862, under the pressure of discouragement, Maine gave Coburn only 42,744 votes, Bradbury, the Copperhead candidate, 32,108, and Jameson only 6764. The increase in Bradbury's vote of more than 12,000 over Dana's vote in 1861 tells the story. There were men who bitterly protested against being called Copperheads for supporting Bradbury, but they were to be judged by their acts and their company, not by their professions. They helped a man whose opposition to the war was notorious.

Following the election in Maine came the battle of Antietam, in which McClellan drove Lee back and inflicted severe losses on him. President Lincoln seized on his long-sought opportunity to proclaim the downfall of slavery, and on September 22, 1862, his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was issued. This was the burst of the sun through clouds of doubt and discouragement that had long hung over the devoted anti-slavery people. Mr. Hamlin's feelings may be judged from the following characteristic letter:—

BANGOR, September 25, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR, — I do not know as in the multiplicity of the correspondence with which you are burdened this note will ever reach your eye; but I desire to express my undissembled and sincere thanks for your Emancipation Proclamation. It will stand as the great act of the age. It will prove to be wise in statesmanship as it is patriotic. It will be enthusiastically approved and sustained, and future generations will, as I do, say God bless you for this great and noble act.

Yours sincerely,

H. HAMLIN.

To the President.

<sup>1</sup> The omission of sentences is palpable here. This was aimed at McClellan.

Mr. Lincoln replied : —

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, September 28, 1862.

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN:

*My dear Sir,* — Your kind letter of the 25th is just received. It is known to some that while I hope some from the proclamation, my expectations are not as sanguine as those of some friends. The time, for its effect Southward has not come; but Northward the effect should be instantaneous. It is six days old, and while commendation in newspapers and by distinguished individuals is all that a vain man could wish, the stocks have declined, and troops come forward more slowly than ever. This, looked soberly in the face, is not very satisfactory. We have fewer troops in the field at the end of the six days than we had at the beginning, — the attrition among the old outnumbering the addition by the new. The North responds to the proclamation sufficiently *in breath*, but breath alone kills no rebels.

I wish I could write more cheerfully; nor do I thank you the less for the kindness of your letter.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

It was questioned at the beginning of this chapter whether emancipation was as largely responsible for the disastrous elections of 1862 as some historians maintain. That it contributed to the general result is plain, though it was not the dominating influence. Horace Greeley pointed out that it was difficult for people who had denied the dangers of slavery to discover in a year that slavery was the cause of the rebellion. In large States like New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, that had foreign populations, or were adjacent to Southern States, and had been strongly affected with the pro-slavery sentiment, the Emancipation Proclamation met with disfavor among various elements, and was sufficient to swell the tide of defeat that was already running against the administration, as was reflected in the result in Maine. But while these States defected from the Republican ranks in October, and notwithstanding the moral effect of their conduct, the remaining New England States, as well as Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, California, Oregon, Delaware, and Missouri, in the following November stood by the President, and in the last stage of the electoral contest his policy was indorsed.

This was probably the most anxious period through which the patient President had yet passed. While he was eagerly watching for signs of encouragement, he rarely allowed himself to be deceived. Now that the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, he waited for



General McClellan to strike a vigorous blow, and once more it was the old story of "the hope deferred" and "the heart made sick." Without victories in the field the proclamation was without force; to quote Mr. Lincoln at a previous period, "it would be as effective as the pope's bull against the comet." The battle of Antietam, which was fought on September 17, seemed to exhaust General McClellan, and he relapsed into his state of inactivity. He failed to follow up Lee and clinch the victory he had gained.<sup>1</sup> He refused to obey President Lincoln's order of October 6, "to cross the Potomac, and to give battle to the enemy or drive him South." While he was thus inactive "Jeb" Stuart made a brilliant circuit of the Federal army, penetrating even into Pennsylvania and recrossing the Potomac. This was the second time Stuart snapped his fingers in the face of General McClellan, and President Lincoln evidently concluded that the time had come when patience ceased to be a virtue. He sent for Mr. Hamlin, and McClellan was the subject of the interview that followed.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Hamlin was one of the first of Mr. Lincoln's friends to lose confidence in General McClellan; and while he had earlier suggested his retirement from the command of the Army of the Potomac, he now went on to Washington to urge his dismissal. He had followed the course of McClellan with great care, and besides this he had sustained close relations with the Committee on the Conduct of the War, as well as with Berry, Kearny, Hooker, Heintzelman, Stanton, and others who had authentic information at their disposal. Many pages might be written on this subject, but the purpose is to present Mr. Hamlin's own opinions without reviewing a dead controversy. He knew General McClellan, and had found his head turned by flattery; he had seen him adopt almost a contemptuous attitude towards Mr. Lincoln, even before he entered on the disastrous Peninsular campaign. Mr. Hamlin's patience was exhausted when McClellan refused to obey the President's order of January, 1862, and move against the enemy, and he proposed that McClellan should be removed. Mr. Lincoln used to ask as a poser, "If not McClellan, then who?" Mr. Hamlin replied, "General Charles F. Smith." But

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hamlin's feelings may be judged by this extract from a letter to his son, Major Charles Hamlin, of September 20, 1862: "We have been watching the results in Maryland with great anxiety, and we now have the unpleasant information that the rebels have got off. *This should not have been.* We can never get them in such a trap again. I know of no remedy but to dismiss some of the worthless men in command. Better men, rank and file, were never in any army. How much, too, do I wish the President had more energy, and would come up to the just demands of the country. He will do it, and the sooner the better."

<sup>2</sup> The *Bangor Jeffersonian* simply announced that the President had summoned Mr. Hamlin: it was understood to consult him on the state of public affairs.

General Smith's untimely death after Donelson closed the incident.<sup>1</sup> He had been commandant at West Point.

Mr. Hamlin spent the night of October 13 with Mr. Lincoln at the Soldiers' Home, and they sat up until morning discussing General McClellan and the plans of the military campaign. This was a conference of extraordinary interest. Mr. Hamlin related the brief facts to his son Charles; but his unwillingness to descend into details is to be regretted. However, the bare outline is enough to picture the magnanimity of President Lincoln in a striking light, and also to satisfy the fair-minded supporters of General McClellan of Mr. Lincoln's generosity and fairness. Mr. Hamlin found the President greatly worried over the military situation and the development of the McClellan problem into a political issue, yet he was disposed to be just as fair and patient as he was with the South when its leaders were threatening secession. Indeed, there was a marked parallel, and Mr. Lincoln once again found himself obliged to listen to one who had originally warned him against his course. But although the President had had numerous provocations to remove General McClellan, he would not take the last step until he felt sure that he was absolutely justified in the minds of his advisers and the Northern people. On this point he talked with Mr. Hamlin precisely as he had about freeing and arming the slaves.

Mr. Hamlin in his turn gave General McClellan full credit for building up the Army of the Potomac, but maintained that his usefulness ended there, because he was not a fighter by nature. He reviewed the blundering Peninsular campaign, and asserted that it was a failure from beginning to end because McClellan would not hunt for the enemy and strike a vigorous blow. He pointed out that McClellan had declined opportunities to hit the enemy while he was engaged in a controversy with the administration or was calling for reinforcements, all of which was subsequently proved before the Committee on the Conduct of the War. On the other hand, he contrasted the conduct of McClellan with that of Grant. The one had been supported by the administration with almost unstinted resources, and yet had to be urged to fight. The other had fought his way up to the top, and only asked an opportunity to fight. But while McClellan remained inactive in the field, he was active in meddling with politics, and, worse than that, had been disobedient and even insolent

<sup>1</sup> This incident is referred to in order to give an idea of Mr. Hamlin's judgment of officers. Perhaps no more appreciative tribute was paid to this fine soldier than by General Grant, who wrote: "His death was a severe loss to our Western army. His personal courage was unquestioned, his judgment and professional acquirements were unsurpassed, and he had the confidence of those he commanded as well as of those over him." *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, vol. i. p. 329.

to the President. His refusal to move under orders and his presumptuous letter of advice to Mr. Lincoln were cited. His removal was not only justified, but was now demanded. "I summed McClellan up," said Mr. Hamlin, "by saying that while he was the first man to build a bridge, he was the last to cross it."

Mr. Lincoln practically conceded that he agreed with his associate, and yet while he doubted whether McClellan would prove himself equal to the emergency, he nevertheless felt that in all fairness he should give McClellan one more chance. Although Mr. Hamlin did not go farther into the details of the conference at this point, it is reasonable to suppose that this final opportunity was presented in the now well-known letter which Lincoln wrote General McClellan on the same day he exhausted the subject with Mr. Hamlin, and undoubtedly he discussed this with the Vice-President. Mr. Hamlin spoke of it as not only one of the kindest of Mr. Lincoln's acts, but also as a masterly military plan, which a commander with an open mind would have been quick to seize. But without venturing farther from the known facts of the conference, it may be said that President Lincoln closed by admitting regretfully that he feared his letter would do no good, and that he would soon be compelled to retire McClellan. Mr. Hamlin was touched at this additional proof of Mr. Lincoln's magnanimity, but firmly advised him to dismiss McClellan as soon as possible, since there was no fight in him.

Mr. Hamlin continued to remain in Washington indefinitely in consultation with the President, and his presence at the capital was a subject of more or less speculation. The "New York Evening Post" published a dispatch on October 14, which was correct as far as it went, but fell short of the actual truth. It said:—

"The Vice-President is in Washington to observe the condition of things here. . . . Mr. Hamlin, as all who were in Washington last winter know, is, and always has been, in favor of the most vigorous war measures. He was among the very first to urge emancipation as one of those measures, and of course approves the President's proclamation as far as it goes. He would have it go farther, but is very well satisfied with it as it is, if it is backed up with vigorous action. The opinions of the Vice-President on various subjects connected with the prosecution of the war have not been concealed. He is for the employment only of generals who will support the anti-slavery policy of the government with hearty vigor. In no other way, he thinks, can that policy be carried triumphantly through the ordeal it must pass, with the whole South in arms against it on the one hand, and secret traitors and deluded Democrats in the North opposed to it on the other. Success in the field of battle will soon show the strength of the new policy, in his opinion.

"Mr. Hamlin is here, among other things, to inquire after the troops from



Maine, especially the sick and wounded. He went out last night to the Soldiers' Home, and by the invitation of the President spent the night there. The conference between the two distinguished men was upon the military situation. Mr. Hamlin represented very frankly to the President the uneasiness of the country at large at delays of the army of the upper Potomac, and was undoubtedly informed that there was no disposition, even among the leading generals, to go again into winter-quarters."

This is reproduced principally to show that there was little suspicion at the time that McClellan's retirement was contemplated. The order for his removal came a few weeks later, and created surprise, and the President was charged with political motives. But Lincoln's character, the record of his acts, and his perfect magnanimity, revealed in the conference with Mr. Hamlin, dispose of this. It has been said that if history should censure Lincoln for anything in his relations with McClellan, it would be for retaining him in command as long as he did. General McClellan's friends complained that the dismissal was ill-timed. Mr. Hamlin's opinion, on the other hand, was that after McClellan's delays, his fruitless exploits, his repeated overestimates of the enemy's numbers, his liability to be deceived, his opposition to the President, and his foolish propensity to meddle in politics, there was little guarantee that he would now act with success. Circumstances placed President Lincoln in an extremely difficult position. While he realized that the military exigencies required the removal of McClellan, his own magnanimity compelled him to give McClellan another chance. Moreover, it was General McClellan and his friends who began the tacit political duel, not President Lincoln, and even when they were trying to cut the ground out from beneath his feet, he was willing to give McClellan another chance. He made McClellan the commander of the Army of the Potomac, and could not at first admit that he was a failure. McClellan himself compelled him to that conclusion, and he had to act.

This was perhaps the most important incident in purely military affairs that happened in Mr. Hamlin's intercourse with Mr. Lincoln, next to the arming of the negroes. It is to be remembered that he felt himself the "fifth wheel of the coach," and did not obtrude himself on the President, nor offer him advice unless forced or asked to do so. Indeed, he urged no one for McClellan's successor, although he thought highly of Hooker, and privately favored his appointment. But in his accounts of his relations with President Lincoln he usually emphasized his fears of intruding on the prerogatives of the executive, and his own work during the war was chiefly confined to furthering the interests of men who had come under his personal observation, and watching over the men from his own State. He continued to follow the fortunes of the Union armies with great care; but this

need not be reviewed, and while the Army of the Potomac is struggling along under one commander and another until the coming of Meade, the narrative may turn to Mr. Hamlin's personal work. There were many stories told about him as the "soldiers' friend," and they are a part of the record, since they throw more light on the personal character of the Vice-President.

The man in whom Mr. Hamlin was most interested, and whose fortunes he served to advance most, was Hiram Gregory Berry, of Rockland, Maine. At the outbreak of the war, Berry was a Breckinridge Democrat, but he was one of the first of Maine's men to enlist. Mr. Hamlin had never met Berry until the war began, but when he saw this soldierly, massive, and lion-hearted man, he took to him at once, and in this instance his intuitions were correct. Berry had always been interested in military affairs, and when Sumter was fired on, he set to work organizing the Fourth Maine Infantry. He was a born soldier and leader of men, and the regiment elected him their colonel. Both he and Jameson of the Second Maine won a national reputation by their fine work at Bull Run, and both attracted the attention of the administration. Berry's positive fighting genius was recognized, and in April, 1862, he was appointed brigadier-general, and in January, 1863, a major-general of volunteers. Mr. Hamlin, it is needless to say, induced President Lincoln to promote General Berry. But he was killed at Chancellorsville at the front of his division, and Hooker, who loved and appreciated Berry, said: "There lies the man who should have succeeded me as the commander of the Army of the Potomac." Stanton also told Vice-President Hamlin that Berry had been selected as Hooker's possible successor. He was one of the noblest soldiers Maine produced, and seemed destined to a shining career.

General Hiram Burnham, of Cherryfield, was another Maine man whom Mr. Hamlin recognized at the outset as a coming fighter, and whom he supported. Burnham was a genuine Maine lumberman, hardy, active, brave, and modest, a born leader of men. He went out as a lieutenant-colonel with the Sixth Maine, which was one of the finest regiments the Pine Tree State furnished. Burnham quickly demonstrated that he was a natural soldier, and soon succeeded to the command of his regiment. In action his bravery and soldierly bearing brought him to the favorable attention of his superior officers. He led the charge with the Sixth Regiment on Marye's Heights, at Fredericksburg, and Burnham's Light Division was thereafter famous. Halleck did not promote Burnham as soon as he deserved, but Vice-President Hamlin induced President Lincoln to appoint him a brigadier-general. Grant subsequently recognized the stuff Burnham was made of, and at the beginning of his campaign against Lee trans-

ferred him to General Stannard's Division of the Eighteenth Corps. Burnham was killed at Chapin's Bluffs on September 28, 1864. Like Berry and other Maine officers, he fell at the head of his men while leading a charge. That is his best epitaph.

There were numerous incidents which happened during the first year of the war that ought to be related to show how the Vice-President concerned himself in the welfare of the common soldier. He would go from Maine to Washington to render personal service to men in the ranks, and many stories of his devotion to the plain soldier are still told at the camp-fire reunions of the Grand Army of the Republic, of which he was a member. The point emphasized was that there was no business he would not drop if he could on the call of distress from a soldier. Here is one illustration. Frank D. Pullen, afterward a well-known citizen of Bangor, enlisted in the army as a mere lad. While stationed at Camp Howard, in Virginia, he and others in his regiment were seized with an attack of diphtheria. F. D. Haviland, a prominent resident of Waterville, Maine, who was interested in young Pullen, heard of his illness and went to Washington to see what could be done. There he was told that the case was likely to prove fatal, and in his grief he resolved to go to Camp Howard at once. But not knowing the ways and means of obtaining the necessary permits he was puzzled, until it was suggested that he apply to the Vice-President. He found Mr. Hamlin in the Senate, and after he had learned the object of Mr. Haviland's call, all he did was to take his hat and say, "Come on!"

Mr. Pullen said : —

"There was a buzz around the camp when it was learned that the Vice-President was coming to see some plain soldiers who were sick and did not know him. Uncle John Sedgwick sent him an escort, but he forbade any demonstration, and hurried into the hospital where we were stretched out. He wanted to satisfy himself that we were having all the attention and care that could be given to us, and at the same time to give us a little comfort himself. I don't remember what he said so well as the manner in which he spoke to us. I had once been given up for dead, and his presence was like a tonic. He sat down for a while in our room and talked to us as if we were his own boys. He was so human, so gentle and kind. I remember how the boys followed him with their grateful eyes as he walked softly from one cot to another, saying something cheerful and cheering to each of us. There was no one there ever forgot that scene of the Vice-President trying to comfort the poor sick chaps in that hospital. But that was Mr. Hamlin, and the boys in blue idolized him because he was their real friend."

Captain Frank D. Garnsey, of Bangor, who went out with the Second Maine, told the following story. Garnsey and Lieutenant



Sumner F. Kittredge, of Milo, were serving on picket duty, and the latter was captured. He was released after a confinement of over a year, and came to Washington sick and badly broken down. He found Captain Garnsey there, and tried to obtain the back pay due to him so that he might go home at once to gain his needed rest and medical attendance. But the official to whom he applied happened to be one of those self-sufficient, pompous, selfish men, whose heads are turned by the little power that accident may thrust on them. He would hardly move in his chair when the feeble soldier asked for what was his due. "No," he grunted, "I won't make any disbursements between pay days." Lieutenant Kittredge appealed to Captain Garnsey, who said, "We'll see the Vice-President." "You see Vice-President Hamlin about this trifling affair?" some one sneered. "You don't know Mr. Hamlin," Captain Garnsey replied. He at once called at the senate chamber, and on sending his card to the Vice-President was immediately admitted to his presence. Captain Garnsey simply related the facts of the case, whereupon the Vice-President straightened up, and a stern look came over his face. "Where is this officer?" he asked. "Five minutes' walk from here," replied Captain Garnsey laconically. Without another word Mr. Hamlin took his hat and started. When they reached the destination there sat the all-sufficient officer in his glory. He had not stirred. "Vice-President Hamlin," said Captain Garnsey, "simply eyed that man, and the look that came out of his big black eyes was sufficient to change the major's high-and-mighty appearance. He began to sink into himself. Mr. Hamlin began: 'Are you the man who refused to let a sick soldier have his back pay because you were not willing to make a disbursement between pay days?' The major admitted in a weak voice that he was. 'Well,' Mr. Hamlin continued, 'you make him out a check on the Treasury at once for every cent that is due him, and don't you delay either, or I will know the reason why.' The major was simply crushed, and in less time than it takes to tell the story, he made out a check and handed it to Vice-President Hamlin, who was standing there as grim as an Indian sachem."

The following incident was often related by Mr. Hamlin's friends to illustrate the forgiving and generous side of his nature. A curious politician, whose name was "Jim" Carle, was one of Mr. Hamlin's most bitter personal enemies. Having known Mr. Hamlin for many years, he seemed to think that his acquaintance gave him the special right to be personally abusive. Up to the outbreak of the war Carle was identified with the pro-slavery Democracy in Bangor who degenerated into rebel sympathizers; but when the conflict began an incident happened that changed his attitude towards Mr. Hamlin. He had a daughter living South, and he became very anxious about her

welfare. He went to Washington and tried to obtain a pass for her within the Union lines, but he failed, and in his distress asked a friend what to do. "Go to the Vice-President," was the reply. "But I can't," said Carle. "Try," was the answer, and pocketing his chagrin Carle called on Mr. Hamlin and stated his case. Without making any promise Mr. Hamlin at once went to the War Department, and presently returned with the pass. Handing it to Carle, he said: "Jim, you have been abusing me all your life, but I am going to heap coals of fire on your head. Here is the pass that you want." Carle burst into tears and asked Mr. Hamlin's pardon for his conduct. His daughter was rescued from her dangerous position, and, like the fairy tale, this story ends with Carle as a firm friend of his benefactor the rest of his life.

Another touching incident was related. Mr. Hamlin often went fishing near Burnham, Maine, where a friend of his, named Johnson, lived, who used to accompany him on these occasions. Mr. Johnson had two sons in the army. One day he received a message saying one son had been killed, and that the second was lying dangerously ill at Fortress Monroe, and must be removed North. Mr. Johnson started at once to go to his son, but, alas, his pocket was picked, and he found himself in Washington without a cent of money when every moment was worth a day to him at any other time. His first thought was of Mr. Hamlin, and he made his way to his room without ceremony. Although the hour was late and the Vice-President was just retiring, he flung on his clothes, gave Johnson whatever money he had, rushed around Washington, routed up the members of the Maine delegation, and raised more money. At the earliest moment the next morning he hastened to the War Department, and without loss of time procured a pass from Secretary Stanton, which enabled Johnson to proceed to his destination on the first steamboat to Fortress Monroe. But it was too late. The boy was dead when his father reached him. Yet Johnson never forgot Mr. Hamlin's help, and often told the story with tears in his eyes.

These incidents might be multiplied, but the progress of the story of Mr. Hamlin's life cannot be further interrupted. To generalize in the words of another writer: "Many a regiment of Maine troops, and many an individual soldier and officer, can bear abundant testimony to the zealous care which he continually took of their interests. Had his position been a different one, he might have done more. Situated as he was, however, it can with all truth be said that he did everything which was in the power of man to do."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carroll's *Twelve Americans*, p. 162.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### MR. HAMLIN SUPPORTED PRESIDENT LINCOLN

VICE-PRESIDENT HAMLIN probably rendered President Lincoln his most disinterested service during the gloomy winter of 1862-63, when the fate of the nation appeared to be trembling in the balance. The failure of the Union armies to make progress against the Confederacy, the disastrous defeats they sustained at Fredericksburg and in other battles, and the apparent lack of a policy in the President, all combined to stimulate opposition to Mr. Lincoln's renomination, and a much harder fight was made against him than was generally known. His success and apotheosis silenced many who had been his private but determined opponents, and the greater Lincoln's fame became, the more reluctant were they to admit their position. Thus this phase of Lincoln's administration is likely to remain a mystery. One important incident, however, may be now disclosed that will throw light on this opposition to Lincoln as well as on Mr. Hamlin's friendship for him. The radical leaders in Congress offered Mr. Hamlin a nomination for President, but he declined, and helped secure Mr. Lincoln his renomination.

But the circumstances first require a careful statement in order that this incident may be fully understood and appreciated. After history had taken measure of Lincoln's greatness, there was a disposition to underestimate the radical element around him, and they were unduly censured for urging the President to a more rapid pace. But after the righting of the conditions of this period has fairly taken place, and it has been clearly perceived that Mr. Lincoln grew and wrested his greatness out of the struggles around him, the radical leaders ought to stand in their right relations to him. It has been said that "it takes a great deal of life to make a little art;" it may be said, also, that it takes many men to make one great man. Both sides of the story of the Lincoln administration show that the President and the radicals supplemented and learned from each other, no matter what their personal relations may have been. On this point the truth should be emphasized, that it is a great mistake to judge public men of this time by their attitude towards Mr. Lincoln. The writers of this period do not fall into the error of judging John Adams by his attitude towards Washington. Surely men like Chandler, Wade,



Sumner, Collamer, Trumbull, Hale, Wilson, Stevens, Henry Winter Davis, and others have each his own place in history, and they and their colleagues are not to be dismissed by a single stroke of the pen. They were the vigorous leaders of the day. They were the product of a stormy period. Some of them were great men. Since the death of Chandler the Senate has not had a member of his equal in force. Since the passing of Stevens, the House has not had a leader who exerted so much power as he, with the single exception of Thomas B. Reed, of Maine.

But it is not necessary to defend the radical leaders of Congress of the war times. They were patriots. They "had no axe to grind." They were as anxious to save the Union as the President was. They sometimes differed from him. Sometimes they were right; sometimes they were wrong. But they were not always wrong; nor was President Lincoln always right. Their opposition strengthened him, and he gained in the contest as the oak does in its battles with the gale. The majority of the radicals liked President Lincoln personally, though they did not always agree with him or understand his policy and acts. There were a few who thought that the great Lincoln was a popular myth, though their hearts softened as they looked back on the gentle, patient man whose way to his martyrdom was beset even with party strife. They were in the smoke of the conflict then, and it was no time for sentimentalizing. Their business it was to act, and let history judge of their motives. Mistakes were to be expected, but if they tried to do right to save their country, and if they strengthened the President even through their opposition, it is a peculiarly selfish spirit that would exclude them from the glory of the stirring times in which they lived. An historian who passes over men who were held to be great and good in their days, because they are not named as the authors of great acts of legislation, is blind and incompetent. This would deny Thomas H. Benton greatness, and yet few were more effective than he in shaping legislation. Thus, while Stevens, Chandler, and others of this period have few specific acts of legislation to their credit, they had few equals or superiors in directing Congress in the right path, and Thaddeus Stevens was one of the few who stood only second to Lincoln in greatness. But the Republican party will never forget its fathers.

When the national fortunes were at a low ebb in the winter of 1862-63, an incident happened that impelled the radical members of Congress to act. Others coöperated who were not usually in sympathy with them. This was a movement to retire Mr. Seward from the Cabinet, and it promised to result in a rebellion against President Lincoln. This was the culmination of the general distrust in which Secretary Seward was held by the leaders of the stronger element in

Congress. His unfortunate views at the outbreak of the war, his support of McClellan, his disposition to compromise, and generally conservative attitude had served to incline leaders in Congress to the belief that he was the chief cause of the President's slowness. That which precipitated action was his unfortunate letter to Charles Francis Adams, the United States minister to England. This was written on July 5, 1862, and it had this expression in speaking of the rebels and anti-slavery leaders, that they were "acting in concert together to precipitate a servile war, . . . the latter by demanding an edict of universal emancipation as a lawful and necessary, if not, as they say, the only legitimate way of saving the Union." When Senator Sumner showed this dispatch to Mr. Lincoln in the following December, he was surprised, and disclaimed all knowledge of it.<sup>1</sup>

This indiscreet dispatch inclined even Sumner against Seward, with whom he had enjoyed very cordial relations. The Republican senators held a caucus on December 18, and appointed Collamer, Trumbull, Howard, Harris, Grimes, Pomeroy, Fessenden, Sumner, and Wade a committee to call on the President and suggest the expediency of making changes in the Cabinet. Mr. Seward was not named, but it was perfectly well understood that he was meant, and he and Chase tendered their resignations. This, it will be conceded, was a representative committee, including the radical Sumner and Wade and the conservative Collamer, Harris, and Grimes, with others of intermediate standing. It well reflected the feeling against Secretary Seward, and is one phase of the opposition to President Lincoln. Of these senators, Collamer, Grimes, Sumner, and Wade were certainly opposed to Mr. Lincoln's renomination, and others were, too, although their opposition was based chiefly on their objections to his policy as exemplified in this instance. Wade was open and vigorous, as it is well known, while the other senators named contented themselves chiefly by expressing their preferences for another candidate, though they loyally supported Mr. Lincoln when he became the nominee.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Hamlin sympathized with this movement, but he had no part in it. This was due to his feelings about his official and personal relations with Mr. Lincoln. His sense of courtesy to the President prompted him to refrain from participating in an affair that did not come within his province. Still he never hesitated to place himself on record when his convictions were formed, and in this instance his friends knew what they were. He expressed himself briefly to his wife on December 19, in a letter, as follows:—

"There has been a considerable excitement here growing out of the

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Sumner*, by E. L. Pierce, vol. iv. p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> The Pomeroy circular calls for no comment.

resignation of Seward. It is about over, and I think nearly all our best and truest men are rejoiced at it, and feel confident that great good will result from it. He has been regarded as the millstone of the administration. It is not yet known who will be his successor."

But there was to be no successor. President Lincoln had come to appreciate Mr. Seward's peculiar ability as an advocate, and had learned how to exercise it under proper restraint. Mr. Seward's facile pen was of great use to him in inspiring foreign nations in the ability of the United States government to conquer the rebellion. That was Mr. Seward's gift, and under the direction of the wise and discreet President, he employed it well and honorably.

But while Mr. Lincoln refused to let Mr. Seward retire, the incident did not close with the Secretary's withdrawal of his resignation. The opposition to President Lincoln's aspirations for a second term began now to take definite shape, and the question was, who should be the man. One day in the winter of 1863, Vice-President Hamlin returned to his rooms in Washington with an unusually serious look on his face. His wife asked him what the matter was, and after some meditation, he told her, with a strict injunction of secrecy, that his radical friends in Congress had held a private conference, and had asked him to become their candidate for the Republican nomination for President in 1864. But he said he gave them to understand that, while he and they had always been good friends, and though he appreciated the sincerity of their motives, they must not approach him on the subject of the presidency, since Lincoln was his friend and he was Lincoln's friend. While he thought that the President had been slow in starting in the right direction, he was moving ahead now, and with the slaves freed, the negroes armed, and McClellan dismissed, events would surely soon favor the Union. "I am loyal to Lincoln, and it is our duty now to lay aside our personal feelings and stand by the President."

Mr. Hamlin evidently intended that this state secret should die with him. When in his last days the sun of Lincoln's fame was rising to its meridian, he well saw that an indiscriminating world would unjustly censure men simply because they had not accepted Lincoln in his lifetime. Only once more did he refer to this incident. A few years before his death, his son, General Charles Hamlin, was questioning him about the opposition to President Lincoln's renomination. He said, as if inadvertently, "The radicals offered me the nomination." But when he was pressed to reveal the facts, he meditated a moment, and then replied firmly, "I shall not say anything more about it." That was his way. Nothing could have shaken his decision. He was careless about his own fame, but cared dearly for that of his friends. He had understood Lincoln in his own lifetime better



than they, and the most of them had come to his opinions expressed in 1863. But surely in the new century, with all the acts of the Lincoln administration before them, men will not cease to honor the robust leaders in Congress in war times, because they once in despair turned to Mr. Hamlin to lead them. They were not men who said, "The king can do no wrong."

The importance of Mr. Hamlin's declination of this tender of support for the presidency may be better appreciated when the situation itself is minutely presented by the biographer of Sumner, who was unfavorable to Mr. Lincoln's continuation in office:—

"There were times during the war when there was a lack of enthusiasm for Mr. Lincoln, and a distrust of his fitness for his place among public men who were associated with him. Visitors to Washington in 1863-1864 were struck with the want of personal loyalty to him. They found few senators and representatives who would maintain cordially and positively that he combined the qualifications of a leader in the great crisis; and the larger number of them, as the national election approached, were dissatisfied with his candidacy. An indifference towards him was noted in the commercial centres, and among the most intelligent of the loyal people. Historians and biographers have hesitated to reveal the state of opinion concerning him, but historical verity loses by the suppression. He was thought to be wanting in the style, in the gravity of manner and conversation, which are becoming in the chief of a great nation. His habit of interrupting the consideration of grave matters with stories was attributed to levity, and offended sober-minded men who sought him on public business. A man of 'infinite jest,' the underlying seriousness of his nature was not readily observed. But the criticism did not stop here. He was felt to be too easy-going, to be disposed to give too much time to trifles; to be unbusiness-like in his methods, slow and hesitating where vigorous action was required; and the objection in general was that in capacity and temperament he was inadequate to the responsibilities of the head of a nation at such a momentous period. This estimate was held honestly by many clear-headed and patriotic men; nor can their sincerity be questioned, although the final judgment of mankind is that of all men he was the best fitted for the high place which he filled during the civil war."<sup>1</sup>

But a careful discrimination is to be made between the various times in which the opposition to Mr. Lincoln's renomination manifested itself. It was natural that in the gloomy winter of 1863, with the recollection of Fredericksburg fresh in mind and with the undaunted Confederacy in view, the vigorous leaders of the Republican party should doubt the expediency of reëlecting a President who had failed

<sup>1</sup> Pierce, vol. iv. pp. 194, 195.

to conquer a rebellion after two years' fighting. But when results came from Mr. Lincoln's carefully laid plans, and the crushing victories of Vicksburg and Gettysburg followed this season of depression, men who had doubted the President now felt differently, and he was borne on to success on the tide of victory. Thus, while strong and sincere leaders such as Chandler, Collamer, Sumner, Wilson, Grimes, Stevens, Wade, Davis, Julian, and others in Congress were once impressed with the apparent necessity of selecting a new man for President, with few exceptions this turn of affairs reconciled them to Mr. Lincoln's renomination. Governor Andrew, of Massachusetts, David Dudley Field, John Jay, Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, Secretary Chase, and many other distinguished men were also identified with the anti-Lincoln movement at its various stages. Obviously, a discrimination is also to be made between conservative leaders like Collamer and erratic antagonists such as Greeley.

While the hostility to President Lincoln continued to grow and cluster around Secretary Chase, Mr. Hamlin's faith in him and his statesmanship continued to strengthen. He could now judge him better by the fruits of his administration. While, for example, Mr. Hamlin had preferred immediate emancipation, he now saw Mr. Lincoln's more conservative policy succeeding. He said afterwards in private conversation that, waiving the question of the superiority of the various plans to exterminate slavery, the fact was, Mr. Lincoln succeeded and exhibited consummate statesmanship in steering his way through the most perplexing problems. Mr. Hamlin was also impressed by the ability the President had revealed in military affairs, though of course he did not fully appreciate it until later years when he could read the entire record. The ultimate knowledge the President disclosed of the military operations, his own plans, his judgment of officers, which necessarily entered into their private interviews, struck Mr. Hamlin with force, and caused him to see how Mr. Lincoln was developing. But that which particularly interested the Vice-President was the wonderful hold he had obtained on the masses of the people, which was another reflection of his honesty, democracy, and faith in plain mankind. This naturally appealed to the Vice-President.

While the spring campaign of 1863 opened unpromisingly with the disastrous defeat at Chancellorsville, it proved to be a "poor beginning with a good ending." The simultaneous victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg were the sun of Union success bursting through clouds of defeat. At Gettysburg, Lee met his Waterloo, and the Confederate invaders were turned back from Union soil. At Vicksburg, Grant won his Ulm, and by opening the Mississippi split the Confederacy in twain. It is necessary to dwell on these battles to indicate Mr.

Hamlin's opinion of Grant. An interesting study of Grant and Lee is afforded. Mr. Hamlin believed Grant to be the Cæsar of the age, and he stood by the conqueror of Donelson from the time he won his first great victory. He, like many other practical men, upheld Grant because he was a fighter, and approved President Lincoln's confidence in him. But without anticipating further, it may be said that Lee's defeat at Gettysburg and Grant's success at Vicksburg are of peculiar interest to these pages, since the circumstances serve to contrast these two great soldiers, and show why Mr. Hamlin continued his enthusiastic support of Grant until the end of the war, and ranked him as the great captain of the century.

General Lee had name and prestige in his favor, and the support of the Confederate government, when he took charge of the army. General Grant literally had to fight his way into the Union army and to win the confidence of the administration. General Lee marched into the Union territory with the approval of his government, and with one of the finest and bravest armies that man ever commanded. The notion that they were a "thin line of ragged and half starved men" is maudlin nonsense. The men who met them were under the impression that if they were starving, it was only for Yankees. General Lee was defeated by a gallant, but admittedly inferior opponent. The mistakes the commanders on both sides made — allowing for the brilliant work of Hancock and others — incline historians to the opinion that Gettysburg was in the main a battle of the ranks, and a conspicuous all-round example of genuine American bravery. General Lee was not on his own soil; but neither was Grant on his. Lee had good roads and fallow fields through which to travel, and one great river to pass; Grant had to cut his way partly through a wild country and cross great rivers and other bodies of water, with Joseph Johnston, a genius, ahead of him. Moreover, in carrying out his plans he had to disobey Halleck's orders, and yet he won at Vicksburg the most brilliant campaign of the war.

Mr. Hamlin was in Chicago, presiding over the deliberations of the National Canal Association, in company with General Hiram Walbridge, of New York, when the battle of Gettysburg began. He hurried to the scene, since his son Charles was assistant adjutant-general on the staff of General A. A. Humphreys, commanding the second division of the Third Army Corps. Mr. Hamlin arrived the day after the fighting had closed, to find the Union lines impregnable, the enemy in retreat, and his son unharmed and recommended for promotion. His presence on the field created speculation, and some officers appeared to think that it was another case of "Washington interference." President Lincoln was warning General Meade that he ought to follow up Lee lest he should escape. Mr. Hamlin reached



the same conclusion, and remained on the field in hopes of seeing the Confederate army annihilated. But while there was doubt, hesitation, and a division of opinion in the Union camp, Lee fled, and the golden opportunity was lost. One who was with Mr. Hamlin was Noah Brooks, the historian, who was to have been President Lincoln's private secretary during his second term. He described the scene at this juncture, and rehearsed interesting incidents as follows :—

“Meade's headquarters, on my return, presented a chopfallen appearance ; probably the worst was known there before I had left on my own private and special reconnoissance. Here I met Vice-President Hamlin, who was also a visitor at Meade's headquarters, and who had been taken out to see the fight (which did not come off) at a point near Williamsport. As we met, he raised his hands and turned away his face with a gesture of despair. Later on, I came across General Wadsworth, who almost shed tears while he talked with us about the escape of the rebel army. . . . Vice-President Hamlin and myself were dispatched by General Meade in an ambulance under the charge of a young lieutenant of cavalry by the turnpike road to Frederick, where we took a train to Washington. Columns upon columns of army wagons and artillery were now in motion towards Frederick, crossing the field, blocking the roads, and interlacing the face of the whole country with blackened tracks which heavy wheels cut in the rich, dark soil of Maryland, saturated with days of rain. Here and there one passed a knot of wagons inextricably tangled or hopelessly mixed by the roadside. . . . At one point our driver was urged by the lieutenant to cut in between two trains which had suddenly parted, and showed a long clear space ahead. As he was whipping up his horses, the wagon-master in charge of the tangled teams came out ahead of us and, shaking his fist, shouted in stentorian tones, ‘Get out of that!’ Whereupon our lieutenant stood up on the dashboard and shouted in reply, ‘I have the Vice-President of the United States in this wagon, and he must get the two o'clock train from Frederick.’ The wagon-master, nothing daunted, cried back, ‘I don't care if you have got the Saviour of mankind in that wagon, you can't come up here.’ Even the tired and dejected Vice-President was forced to smile grimly at the resolute wagoner's reply. Nevertheless we did catch the two o'clock train from Frederick ; and the next day, according to the President's request, I reported to him all that I had heard and seen. . . . His grief and anger were something sorrowful to behold.”<sup>1</sup>

While it could not be perceived at the time that Gettysburg and Vicksburg marked the turn of the war, it was recognized that the Confederacy had received a vital blow, although there was a long struggle ahead to crush the rebellion. At this juncture the phase of

<sup>1</sup> *Washington in Lincoln's Time*, pp. 95, 96.

the contest against the government that concerned Mr. Hamlin most, since it came more within his province, was the Copperhead onslaught on the administration, which had opened up after the adjournment of Congress and was now raging fiercely in the Northern States. The behavior of Horatio Seymour and other leading Democrats at this crisis is to be explained on the ground of partisanship and in some cases of secret sympathy for slavery. Thomas A. Hendricks, for example, was one of the leaders of the Democracy in Congress who steadily and at every step resisted constitutional action to exterminate the institution. Mr. Seymour and other distinguished men bitterly resented the charge of Copperheadism; but it is only a mild reply to say that their statesmanship belittled their intellectual character. Their desire to stop the war was as short-sighted as it would be to call off firemen in the midst of a conflagration because some had been killed.

Mr. Hamlin had several conferences with Mr. Lincoln about the coming elections shortly before leaving Washington, and was at the capital when the President literally extinguished Vollandigham and his sympathizers with the ridicule that his adroit letter to the New York Democracy aroused. Vollandigham preached treason under the pretense of vindicating his constitutional rights, and Mr. Lincoln, recognizing his value to the Confederacy, presented him to the rebels by sending him through their lines. There was a prodigious outburst of wrath from the Copperheads. Seymour called the President's act "revolution." But Mr. Lincoln knocked the ground from under the Copperheads' feet by asking, "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert?" He clinched his advantage by agreeing to release Vollandigham on condition that his friends would sign pledges recognizing the war and promising their support. Thus the Copperheads were caught in a trap which they had set themselves, and Mr. Hamlin, for one, ranked this as one of the most brilliant achievements to be placed to President Lincoln's credit. But aside from this, it was another revelation of his unique power of statement, and his success was further proof of his nearness to the Northern heart.

President Lincoln was naturally anxious to seize the advantage he had gained, and he urged on the party leaders the necessity of waging the most vigorous campaign within their power. He also thought that Mr. Hamlin should take a larger part in the contest than he did the year before, and it was agreed that after the Maine election the Vice-President should go to New York at least, and appear as the spokesman of the administration. Mr. Hamlin returned home in July and engaged in the campaign until the polls were closed. The lines were once more closely drawn on the issue laid down by the Copper-

heads and their nominee of the last year, Bion Bradbury. The Republican candidate was Samuel Cony, who was both an able and popular leader. Mr. Hamlin's speeches were in substance an appeal to the loyal Democrats not to allow party prejudice to blind them to the awful consequences that would follow an attempt to oppose the government in the exercise of its lawful measures. He held that the opponents of the government were a democracy only in name, and charged that the leaders were insane from loss of power. His predictions of success in Maine were borne out by the result. Cony swept the State by 18,000 majority over Bradbury, and thus the elections were auspiciously opened.

A curious evidence of the bitterness of the times was the attacks the Copperhead press made on Mr. Hamlin for even speaking in the campaign. One organ in New York city, that was subsequently suppressed for a short time, sneered at Mr. Hamlin for "stumping the wilds of Maine," and added that while it was "beneath his dignity," nothing dignified could be expected from such an administration. It was probably George William Curtis who neatly turned this in "Harper's Weekly," as follows:—

"A Copperhead authority complains that Vice-President Hamlin lately addressed 'small political gatherings at the cross-roads and in the taverns of the rural districts of Maine.' The critic claims, of course, to be peculiarly democratic. But he has yet to learn that at just such cross-road and district-school room and tavern parlor meetings, the public opinion is educated and formed which governs the country. And it is the glory of our system that no office exalts a man beyond his duties as a citizen, one of the first of which is the instruction and enlightenment of his neighbor. When John Quincy Adams, having been President, goes to Congress as a representative, he illustrates perfectly the truly democratic character of our institutions. And when Mr. Hamlin, being Vice-President, confers with his fellow-citizens upon their public duty in a time of great national peril, it is a signal example which every faithful American will emulate. It is not those who cry 'Lord, Lord,' who are the most religious; nor is it those who call themselves 'Democrats' who are the most democratic. It would be hard to find in our history two men more simply, honestly, and entirely democratic than Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin."

Maine elected Cony by nearly 18,000 majority, which was a gain of about 14,000 votes over the previous year for the administration. In accordance with his understanding with President Lincoln, Mr. Hamlin delivered a speech at Cooper Union, New York city, on September 30, 1863. This enters into the record in part as evidence of his views of the political and military situation, and also of the Copper-



heads. Mr. Hamlin was plain-spoken in his allusions to the Copperheads, and this was rendered necessary, whatever the apologists of Seymour might say. It was time to call a spade a spade, and it was Mr. Hamlin's peculiar mission as the representative of the Union government to expose Copperheadism in its true light to the multitude. But first he gave a brief review of the political exigencies of the times, and speaking of the necessity of union between patriots he said: "We are, to use a common expression, in the same boat, and if the boat goes down for us it goes down for you; and if we sweep it to the desired haven of rescue amidst the breakers of a lee shore, we arrive there together with you." Predicting success, Mr. Hamlin said: "He who doubts it must believe that God has deserted our government and our country. Look to see within what limits we have compressed this rebellion. In the beginning it held control over 830,000 square miles of territory; to-day it has control over less than 300,000. . . . As we compress the power of the rebels into the Gulf States, as we diminish the area over which they have command, we diminish in greater ratio the power of their arms."

Urging the necessity of a union between the patriots of both parties, Mr. Hamlin declared that he had no fellowship with him who dwarfed his action by a miserable party standard. "We have a country to save. . . . It is an hour, it is a day, when patriotism should rise superior to party. . . . The little I have seen of war leads me to desire peace, but I want that peace which shall be purchased without dishonor; I want that peace which shall leave no contest for our children's children hereafter; I want no peace when this rebellion is within our grasp and almost beneath our feet. I want no peace which might revive it; and I believe that the surest road to accomplish that peace, aye, indeed, the most rapid and certain road to peace, is by recruiting your armies and fighting for peace. Now, Mr. President, I am just so much of a peace man that I am willing to fight for peace. Nay, more, I do not believe for a single moment that any peace worth having lies in any direction than that of arms. . . . I affirm, my friends, and give it as my opinion, that if we had a common union at the North and a common loyalty to the government, we could have ended this war months ago; but this aid and comfort the rebels have received from their Northern allies have kept them alive and active for months. Now come together and strike one gallant united blow for the great North that loves the whole country, and this rebellion may be crushed out in its last vestige in ninety days."

After thus summarizing Union victories and reminding the audience that "that mighty artery that reaches from your inland seas to the Gulf of Mexico, God's own highway, over which your own com-

merce floats, is again open and unobstructed," Mr. Hamlin said : " It is evident that in a limited time we can crush out the rebellion in front with arms, and at the ballot-box beat their sympathizers at the rear. And what are the duties that devolve upon us to do this? We owe it to the true and loyal men of the South — men who have been good and true and who love liberty — men like the gallant admiral who sits before you (Farragut). If there were no other earthly considerations, the brave men who have stood up amid all the perils that surrounds them in the rebel States demand it of us, and we owe it to them to be true to our government, and to vindicate their rights as well as our own. We owe it to our gallant army in the field, that we will send recruits to them to enable them to bear on our standard until it floats again over every inch of our own domain. We owe it to the good mothers, the kind-hearted sisters and wives, whose sons, brothers, and husbands have gone forth to the conflict. We owe it to the character of our institutions, because if they go down, they go down in eternal night as the last effort for free government in the world. We owe it to all the considerations that cumulate upon us from the ages of the past ; we owe it to the uncounted generations of the future, that we in this day of our country's trial do our duty like men ; and woe ! woe ! be unto those who fail to do their duty like men."

Turning now to the Copperheads, Mr. Hamlin named Horatio Seymour as a leader of this element, and predicted that the defeat they received in Maine was prophetic of their fate in the nation. He summed them up, showing that their friends in the South counted on them to divide the North, and added : —

" When these men talk along your streets for peace, I tell you to charge it upon them that they, and they alone, are guilty of this procrastination in the return of peace ; there is no doubt about it. They are the same class that we find in New England. They give all the aid and comfort they can to the South ; they discourage recruiting in your army ; they are preventing enlistments ; they stand on the corner of your streets and throw every obstacle in their power against strengthening the armies of the government. Yes, they are still doing all they can in aid of the rebellion, and I tell you, my friends, that down in Maine we did not draw any distinction between the Tory of the revolution and the Copperhead of 1863 ; and if there were any to discuss the relative merits of the two, they would not be found in favor of the Copperheads. . . . Charge it upon them, and hold them up to the public odium of all honest and loyal men, and I tell you that the Empire State will yet roll up 50,000 majority."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE HISTORY OF JOHNSON'S NOMINATION

THE action of the Baltimore Union Convention of 1864 in renominating Mr. Lincoln and in retiring Mr. Hamlin created general surprise at the time, and was the subject of controversy after Mr. Hamlin's death. The behavior of Johnson while President caused the party that had honored him to inquire who was responsible for his nomination for Vice-President. But the facts were not given to the public during Mr. Hamlin's life out of deference to his wishes, and they are now presented chiefly because an attempt was made after Mr. Hamlin's lips were closed forever to represent President Lincoln as the cause of the substitution of Andrew Johnson. This was a slander on the honor of Abraham Lincoln. He not only desired Mr. Hamlin's renomination, but he also endeavored to bring it about at even his own risk, and finally he was terribly disgusted both for political and personal reasons over the selection of Johnson for his associate. Mr. Hamlin's reasons for maintaining silence will be readily appreciated by those who understood his character. He was inexpressibly pained and disgusted at Johnson's conduct as President, but he believed "the least said the soonest mended." If he had allowed it to be known that Charles Sumner was the chief cause of his defeat, that would have impaired Mr. Sumner's usefulness, and increased the animosity in the Republican party without accomplishing any good. Thus the causes of Mr. Hamlin's retirement from the presidential ticket in 1864 remained a mystery, except to those who were responsible for it, and a few others. Their silence is in marked contrast to the vociferous professions of wisecracks who claimed to know it all, and yet kept the mystery to themselves until the last important figure of the Lincoln administration had passed away. History need pass no comment on that. The facts of this convention tell their own story.

The general belief was, until the day before the convention, that the old ticket would be renominated without much opposition. The delegates chosen were known to favor Mr. Lincoln, and Mr. Hamlin's identification with the administration as President Lincoln's friend and trusted counselor made it natural to suppose that he would also share in the indorsement the administration was to receive. Numer-

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ous conventions instructed their delegates to vote for the old ticket, and the newspapers generally predicted that it would be renamed. At the same time, here and there was a call for a war Democrat for Vice-President, and several States, Indiana for one, declared for Lincoln and Johnson, while in others Daniel S. Dickinson, of New York, Benjamin F. Butler, of Massachusetts, and a few other war Democrats were favorably mentioned. Yet the trend of affairs was towards the old ticket, and there is weighty personal evidence to be presented in addition to the testimony of the newspapers. This is emphasized in order to show that Johnson's nomination was brought about in the convention and at the last moment, by an intrigue among the New England delegates and a stampede movement, rather than by a preconcerted movement and an intrigue in the White House. But the most important point to be brought out is the fact that Johnson's nomination was one outcome of the hostility to Lincoln, and the President's attitude, therefore, becomes of unusual interest.

Mr. Lincoln's frank desire for another term is well known. He and Mr. Hamlin talked with each about the probable action of the Baltimore convention. There is no necessity for saying that there was no understanding between them of reciprocal support. They were not that kind of men. Mr. Lincoln was a candidate, and knew that Mr. Hamlin strongly favored him, and expected his renomination. Mr. Hamlin related one interesting incident in his intercourse with Mr. Lincoln at this stage of the canvass, and it was a case where acts spoke louder than words. One day in the early winter of 1864, President Lincoln sent for him, and said in his affable way, "Hamlin, I want you to pick out some bright, likely man, to look after delegates in Maine, and keep a weather eye open for squalls in New England." Mr. Hamlin promptly suggested James G. Blaine, who was then serving his first term in the House, and had come under the President's favorable notice. He was also chairman of the Republican State Committee of Maine, and Mr. Hamlin had already recognized him as a coming leader of brilliant gifts and with a special talent for organization. Mr. Lincoln appeared pleased, and said in his quaint way, "You and Cameron<sup>1</sup> fix it up between you." In

<sup>1</sup> Simon Cameron was loyal to Mr. Hamlin, and the latter knew it. An unscrupulous attempt was made by an interloper to falsify Cameron's position. His story was that Cameron was a participant in a deep plot to nominate Johnson. This person even wrote to a member of the Cameron family, requesting him to say nothing about Senator Cameron's position towards the vice-presidency contest. He also produced an article which a reporter named Burr claimed was authorized by Cameron. The reputation of this reporter who peddled alleged state secrets to sensational newspapers would alone discredit this yarn. Conclusive proof of Simon Cameron's loyalty to Mr. Hamlin is adduced by the following letter that he wrote to William Pitt Fessenden, the original of which was

this manner Mr. Blaine was "fixed up" as one of Mr. Lincoln's managers in New England, and it will be conceded that he knew what was going on.

Mr. Hamlin had other interviews with Cameron, Washburne, Chandler, and others who were working for the President's renomination, and he made suggestions to Mr. Lincoln regarding the management of affairs in New Hampshire and other States. But he came to the conclusion that "no politicians or political combinations of any kind" could defeat Mr. Lincoln, because he had the support of the people, and for this and other reasons he did not find it necessary to take more than an advisory part behind the scenes in the canvass. His office necessarily precluded him from entering publicly into the contest; but with practical managers like Cameron and others in charge the details were in safe hands. Mr. Hamlin always asserted that President Lincoln won his renomination fairly and squarely, and he resented the charge that it was due to timely Union victories and the liberal use of patronage. He was on the scene at the time, and had long realized how completely Lincoln had won the public heart. His opinion remained the same all his life. On July 11, 1889, he wrote James M. Scovel, once a prominent politician in New Jersey, as follows:—

"In my judgment the renomination of President Lincoln was *not* due to the victories of our armies in the field. Our people had absolute faith in his unquestioned honesty, and in his great ability, the purity of his life, and in his administration as a whole. . . . They were the great primary causes that produced the result, stimulated undoubtedly by our victories in the field. Such is my decided opinion, and I have no doubt about it as I express it to you."<sup>1</sup>

But the surface indications, when delegates to the convention were elected were misleading in one important respect. While Mr. Hamlin possibly prevented a serious revolt against President Lincoln in the winter of 1863, his declination of the radical nomination did not discourage all hostility to Mr. Lincoln among certain leaders. Their furnished this volume by General Francis Fessenden, of Portland, Maine, son of Senator Fessenden:—

HARRISBURG, June 15, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR,—I strove hard to renominate Hamlin, as well for his own sake as for yours, but failed only because New England, especially Massachusetts, did not adhere to him.

Johnson will be a strong candidate for the people, but in the contingency of death, I should greatly prefer a man reared and educated in the North.

I hope you will come this way going home.

Truly yours,

SIMON CAMERON.

HON. W. P. FESSENDEN.

<sup>1</sup> *Overland Monthly*, November, 1891: "Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln."

opposition to the President now showed itself in another manner, but its meaning was not clear to the public at the time. A movement was started to nominate a war Democrat for Vice-President, and the reason given was that it would be good policy to take a Democrat on the ticket, since it might further strengthen the union between the Republicans and loyal Democrats. Many good men supported this movement in all sincerity, not knowing that there was another purpose back of it, which was to force Secretary Seward out of the Cabinet. Senator Sumner and others who had been active in another attempt to compel Mr. Seward to resign were the leaders in this one also. They presented Daniel S. Dickinson, of New York, as their candidate, and argued that his renomination would be a victory over Mr. Seward and his friends, and would force his resignation. Thus, in its primary stage, the contest over the vice-presidency was a fight directly against Mr. Seward, and indirectly against Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin.

But there was even "politics within politics" in this instance; and it now remains to explain Charles Sumner's course, though it is done with reluctance. While Sumner was the anti-slavery knight, he was less useful outside of the domain of agitation. He was regarded as impractical, and some of his colleagues plainly charged him with having arrogant, overbearing, and snobbish manners. He had the oratorical temperament, and in endeavoring to lead the Senate he came in collision with William Pitt Fessenden, who was his opposite in nature and the ablest debater in the Senate. Sumner made the mistake of trying to override Fessenden, and the Maine senator resented it. A coldness grew up between them, and finally their encounters developed a positive mutual dislike. They had frequent passages at arms in the Senate, and the "Congressional Globe" amply testifies to their bitterness and personality, though Sumner's Boswell ignores this unpleasant side of his career. Sumner was a poor debater and always got the worst in his encounters with Fessenden. This increased his dislike of Fessenden, and he fell into the grievous error of following up his personalities behind the scenes. A headstrong man, he could not brook opposition, and the result was that in this case he carried his quarrel with Fessenden into the contest over the vice-presidency, and induced Massachusetts to support Dickinson.

Mr. Sumner was Mr. Hamlin's personal friend at this time, strange as it may seem, and the relations between the two were far pleasanter than those between the Vice-President and the senator from Maine. Mr. Hamlin's feelings about the vice-presidency and his preference for a seat in the Senate were also well known. One day about this time, William A. Wheeler, then a representative from New York, called at the Senate to invite Mr. Hamlin to take luncheon with him



on their favorite dish — "gingerbread and cream." He found Mr. Hamlin all alone and fast asleep in the Vice-President's chair, utterly worn out by a long-winded debate. "Wheeler," said Mr. Hamlin, "I will take luncheon with you on condition that you promise me you will never be Vice-President. I am only a fifth wheel of a coach and can do little for my friends." Sumner took Mr. Hamlin at his word, and as public men think comparatively little of the vice-presidency, he conceived the plan of retiring Mr. Hamlin from that office in the expectation that the people of Maine would return him to the Senate in 1865 instead of Fessenden. Thus Mr. Sumner figured that he would hit two birds with one stone, as it were. By nominating Dickinson for Vice-President he would drive Seward into private life, and by sending Mr. Hamlin back to the Senate he would get rid of Fessenden. Modern opinion of Sumner's practicability was expressed by the "Boston Advertiser," which said on December 31, 1897: "Sumner was an unsafe man, doing far more harm than good."

Mr. Hamlin refrained from taking any part whatever in the contest over the vice-presidency. It came to him unsought in the first place, and now he felt that he should maintain his original position. He said to his son Charles at the time the delegates were being elected, that he should make no effort to secure a renomination, and that he should be content with whatever action the convention should take. If he had been an active candidate, it may be safely asserted that there would have been at least an interesting contest on his part. Chandler and others of his friends said in after years that he never asked for support, but appeared simply as a passive candidate. The majority of the Republican senators favored his renomination, and according to Chandler expected it. There were a few known exceptions, the principal ones being Sumner, of Massachusetts, Grimes, of Iowa, and Foster, of Connecticut. They held conferences in the Senate lobby several weeks before the convention with Chauncey F. Cleveland, a former governor of Connecticut, and a few other men who were opposed to Mr. Hamlin. The friends of the Vice-President knew of this at the time, but they did not tell him about it until after Johnson had become President. Thus Mr. Hamlin had at the time no knowledge of the intrigue against him, or he would probably have shaped his course differently when Charles Sumner asked him in 1865 to take the collectorship of Boston.

The opposition to Lincoln and Hamlin was particularly strong in Massachusetts and New York. In the former State, Senator Sumner, Governor Andrew, ex-Governor William Claflin, Stephen H. Phillips, and other well-known men of their day were the leaders. In New York, Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, David Dudley Field, W. Curtis Noyes, and other brilliant men were sincerely outspoken

in their desires for another candidate for President. Greeley went to Washington to try to organize a movement against Mr. Lincoln, and one of the stories current was that he asked Mr. Hamlin to be a candidate.<sup>1</sup> That was probably rumor, and Greeley may have done no more than express his desire in an impulsive way that he would like to have Mr. Hamlin take the field after it became evident that Secretary Chase was out of the contest. But the New York men had the masterful Thurlow Weed to cope with, and he overcame their opposition by executing a *coup d'état*. In Massachusetts, however, the Sumner men had control of the machine, and they held a secret meeting in Boston a short time before the convention to decide on their action. Josiah H. Drummond and Charles J. Talbot, both delegates from Maine, were present and discovered strong feeling against the renomination of Lincoln and Hamlin. But it was agreed, after discussion, that Mr. Lincoln could not be beaten and that Seward might be driven out of the Cabinet by nominating Dickinson for Vice-President. Mr. Talbot's proposition to support Mr. Hamlin was voted down.<sup>2</sup>

Thus it developed, just before the convention, that Mr. Hamlin would have serious opposition in Massachusetts, and his friends in that State acted in his behalf. One of his strongest supporters in New England was Governor Andrew. He had come to the conclu-

<sup>1</sup> Whitelaw Reid, Greeley's distinguished successor as editor of the *New York Tribune*, Parke Godwin, Theodore Tilton, and the Rev. Dr. Henry M. Field, all wrote the author that Greeley made no mention of this to them.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Portland Express* of July 16, 1891, Mr. Drummond gave a comprehensive account of the influences that worked against Mr. Hamlin. Of this secret meeting he said that he and Mr. Talbot did not know its object until they presented themselves. At the meeting "it was stated that many of the radical Republicans of Massachusetts were dissatisfied with Lincoln's administration, and really desired that a more radical Republican should be nominated, but it was a foregone conclusion that Lincoln would be renominated, and it was of no use to make an attempt to nominate any one else. . . . It was stated that the most ready way to keep Mr. Seward from going back into the Cabinet was to nominate a Vice-President from New York, for it would not be possible to have the Vice-President and Secretary of State from New York. . . . When we arrived at Baltimore we found that members of the Massachusetts delegation had been busy in attempting to carry out the programme above suggested. They had interviewed New York men, and learned that a good many of the delegates were favorable to the nomination of Dickinson. . . . I found that there were two well-defined parties in relation to the question of the vice-presidency, and that the friends of Mr. Seward were a great deal excited. They were determined that the Vice-President should not be taken from New York. . . . The matter was one of considerable controversy, closely approaching a degree of anger between the delegates from Maine and some of the delegates from Massachusetts. The latter were accused of acting upon the belief that if Hamlin were not renominated he would contest the senatorship with Pitt Fessenden." Mr. Drummond added that Sumner was sent for and came to Baltimore, but that no Maine man talked with him.

sion that President Lincoln was the majority choice of the party, and in his chivalrous way withdrew his objections, and requested his substitute in the Massachusetts delegation to represent him at the convention. But when he heard of Sumner's schemes he hurried to Baltimore, and asked the delegates of his State to support Mr. Hamlin. After the convention he met General Henry G. Thomas, of Maine, and told him that he had urged Mr. Hamlin's renomination in the belief that he was the choice of the party and Massachusetts Republicans. But it was no use arguing with Sumner, for he had set his heart on manœuvring Fessenden out of the Senate, and he saw nothing else. Sumner even came to Baltimore to make a personal appeal to the Massachusetts delegates to help him. Henry Wilson was likewise disturbed when he heard of Sumner's work, and also went to Baltimore to intercede in favor of Mr. Hamlin. But he first called on President Lincoln in order to obtain authority for using his name. He was one of Lincoln's friends and knew his views. He obtained the desired authority. The story may be told in the words of A. J. Waterman, a delegate, and the attorney-general of Massachusetts in 1888, 1889, and 1890:—

“On the night before the convention Henry Wilson came to the headquarters of the Massachusetts delegation, and his conversation with me convinced me that I ought to support Hamlin. He explained the necessity of President Lincoln's abstaining from any public declaration of his preference for the second office, but assured me that he had full authority to represent the views of President Lincoln privately, and that it was the earnest desire of Mr. Lincoln that Hamlin should be renominated. The next day I voted for Hamlin. There is no doubt in my mind whatever about this. Mr. Wilson was positive in his statements, and I have always been glad that I voted for Hamlin instead of that miserable scamp, who, after getting the presidency, showed out clearly his real sentiments.”<sup>1</sup>

The action of the Massachusetts delegates set the tide against Mr. Hamlin, because it prevented him from having the support of New England, and also because it compelled his friends in the New York delegation at a critical moment to drop him for Andrew Johnson in order to defeat Dickinson. This is best told in the words of Preston King. He was Mr. Hamlin's friend, but was compelled to leave him for Johnson.

<sup>1</sup> Interview in the *Boston Traveler*, July 13, 1891, and confirmed in a letter to the author, February 23, 1897. In the same interview Mr. Claflin, Mr. Phillips, and other anti-Lincoln delegates were quoted as saying that they talked with Wilson, but that he said nothing about Lincoln's preference for Vice-President. It was hardly likely that he would argue with men who were opposed to Lincoln, and were engaged in a movement against his administration, and were in the secret of the Sumner scheme to prevent Fessenden's return to the Senate.



After the unfortunate exhibition made by Vice-President Johnson in the senate chamber, at the time of his inauguration, he was at once taken in hand by his friends and removed to Silver Spring, the suburban residence of Montgomery Blair, as a retreat where, under the care of these friends, prominent among whom was Preston King, of New York, he could, in comparative seclusion and under careful treatment, be restored to a condition of mind and body that would enable him to reappear in his official position in a manner creditable to himself and the high office to which he had been elected.

A few days after his retirement to Silver Spring, Mr. King came to the Vice-President's chamber in the Capitol, still in the charge of John W. Babson, who had been with Mr. Hamlin, for the purpose of obtaining such letters, papers, and messages as might have been received for Mr. Johnson. Upon his entrance into the chamber, and meeting the familiar face of Mr. Hamlin's secretary, who had been present at many interviews between Senator King and Vice-President Hamlin, he appeared disconcerted, and after moving about the room restlessly for a time, sank into the Vice-President's chair, seemingly overwhelmed with depression. His personal relations with Mr. Babson had been very pleasant, the latter having been accustomed to call at the room of the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, of which Mr. King was chairman, and walk home with the senator, particularly if he was detained till after dark, their residences lying in the same direction. Mr. King was well aware of the confidential relations existing between Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Babson, and it was to Mr. Hamlin's personal representative that he opened the conversation by exclaiming with deep feeling and in a tone of remorse, "I am more responsible for this condition of things than any other man in the United States." After this startling self-accusation, he relapsed into silence; but soon, as if desirous of exculpating himself, he continued as follows:—

"I suppose that I am responsible more than any other man for Johnson's elevation to the presidency. But I was Hamlin's friend, and God knows it. When the New York delegates met the night before the convention, I made a private canvass, and learned that the majority personally favored Hamlin, and believed that he ought to have a renomination if Lincoln had one. But before we took formal action, we heard that the Massachusetts delegation had refused to support Hamlin, and we sent a messenger to find out what the truth was. The reply he brought was, 'Massachusetts would not support Hamlin under any circumstances.' We were surprised, and some thought there must be a grave personal reason for it. If Massachusetts had gone for Hamlin, New York would have followed, and that would have set the tide in his direction. He had the lead up to that

time. The fight was between Seward's friends and enemies over Dickinson. I wish that I had stood out stronger for Hamlin, but perhaps it was of no use. Weed and others were for Johnson as the best man to beat Dickinson and save Seward. We took an informal ballot, and Dickinson led. The Hamlin men mostly went over to Johnson on the formal ballot, and that nominated him. But if we had stuck to Hamlin, he might now be in the White House."<sup>1</sup>

Preston King's statement, therefore, furnishes the explanation of the action of the New York delegation. Mr. Seward inspired this, and was probably actuated wholly by motives of self-preservation. While he had no reason to be tender with Mr. Hamlin, it is doubtful, at least, whether in favoring Johnson he was animated by any feelings of resentment towards Mr. Hamlin. He was large-minded and forgiving, and he unquestionably understood that Mr. Hamlin's opposition to him was a matter of opinion rather than of acts. But he thought that he saw a way to cut the Gordian knot by nominating Johnson, and when, therefore, his enemies attacked him with their cry for a war Democrat, he resolved to give them a Roland for their Oliver, by suggesting Johnson, who was a Union Democrat "in the war itself." This was practical politics; it was New York politics. Mr. Seward undoubtedly sounded President Lincoln on this subject, but the historian will search Mr. Seward's voluminous writings in vain to find any explanation of value of the work behind the scenes that made Johnson Vice-President. No man realized better than he how much the Republican party craved knowledge of the responsible authors of Johnson's access to power. Yet he dismissed the subject in a general way and spoke only in guarded language. Thurlow Weed, his faithful adviser, also avoided this subject, though in his reminiscences he threw light on many interesting conventions. The Baltimore convention was one of the silent regrets of that picturesque career.

Thus, when the convention assembled on June 7, Sumner's intrigue had already precipitated a complicated contest over the vice-presidency that was entirely beyond the control of any one man or delegation. The final result was decided by a stampede movement for Johnson, aided by a series of incidents such as naturally happen in an excited gathering of men, and was not due to outside influence. The story

<sup>1</sup> The cause of Preston King's tragic death by suicide, in November, 1865, was not generally understood. The explanation was that he lost his mind worrying over suits that were brought against him as collector of the port of New York. But the probable cause was that he became insane through grieving over the conduct of Johnson and his own responsibility for Mr. Hamlin's defeat. While he was not a successful financier, he had strong common-sense qualities, and it is not probable that he would lose his reason simply from thinking that he was responsible for all suits brought against him as collector. His mind was already unhinged when he entertained that delusion.

that President Lincoln conceived and executed the plan to nominate Johnson appears now in the light of hearsay and fiction, and his personal attitude proves that he was not concerned with this affair. The men who attributed the nomination of Johnson to Mr. Lincoln thereby confessed their gross ignorance of the inside workings of the convention. But while the honorable public will not tolerate the questioning of Mr. Lincoln's word, it becomes necessary to present a record of his acts and words at this juncture to refute the insinuation that he was engaged in a double-face conspiracy against his friend and associate. It is to be borne in mind that this evidence is presented by men who were around him night and day, knew the real man, and were known to be his friends and associates. The other story was developed after Mr. Hamlin's death, and was told by men who called themselves Lincoln's confidential advisers. Mr. Lincoln's known friends repudiated even this latter claim, and history must record that it was made suspiciously late in the day.

The knowledge that Mr. Lincoln's countrymen have of his character will readily furnish them the keynote to his position and acts in this trying moment, when he learned that a cabal had been formed to retire the Secretary of State and the Vice-President in order to strike a blow at his administration. What was the course Mr. Lincoln would naturally follow in this emergency? Would he be likely to take any steps that might complicate the situation? The idea that he absolutely controlled the convention is an assumption, and is not borne out by facts. He was morally certain of his own renomination, but his native shrewdness and caution led him to claim no success until he had grasped it. He well knew of the opposition to him, and when he found that it had broken out in a fierce contest over the vice-presidency on the eve of the convention, he proceeded with just that kind of caution that always marked his conduct at any crisis. He waited to see how events would shape themselves, plainly in the hope and expectation that the old ticket would be renominated. He naturally believed that if he was named again, Mr. Hamlin would be also, and prudence required him to refrain from interfering. He adhered to this policy until Charles Sumner's course compelled him to act in Mr. Hamlin's behalf.

Mr. Lincoln's personal preferences were known to Mr. Hamlin and other men who enjoyed his official and personal confidence in a greater or less degree. They were Henry Wilson, Zachariah Chandler,<sup>1</sup> John G. Nicolay, John Hay, Noah Brooks, Burton C. Cook, Simon Cameron, and Leonard Swett. There were peculiar reasons why Wilson and Chandler should know the President's wishes. They were among the leading radicals who had pursued an independent course in Congress,

<sup>1</sup> This is on the authority of Senator Chandler and his daughter, the wife of Senator Eugene Hale, of Maine.



and yet had thrown their influence for Mr. Lincoln's renomination when he most needed it. Wilson's delicate mission to the Massachusetts delegation is convincing proof of Mr. Lincoln's trust in him. Chandler was instrumental in obtaining an undivided delegation from Michigan for Lincoln and Hamlin. Colonel Nicolay and Major Hay were the President's private secretaries, and it has been well said that there is hardly a page in their history of the Lincoln administration that does not testify to the President's implicit confidence in them. Noah Brooks had known Mr. Lincoln before he became President, and had been chosen by him to be his private secretary during his second term, to succeed Mr. Nicolay, who desired and had earned a foreign consulship. Mr. Cook was an eminent lawyer of Illinois, a close friend of the President and chairman of the delegation from that State. Cameron was Lincoln's manager, and Swett was once his law partner.

When the contest for the vice-presidency broke out at the eleventh hour, it was natural that there should be a strong difference of opinion among the leaders of the Republican party as to the result. Farsighted men like Lincoln, Blaine, and Chandler at first thought that it was a tempest in a teapot and would subside after the President's renomination. Colonel Nicolay wrote General Hamlin, on March 3, 1897: "Mr. Lincoln stated to me his wish that your father should be renominated at Baltimore; that privately and personally he would be pleased if the convention would renominate as a whole the old ticket of 1860. I have not the slightest doubt that he confidently expected this would occur." Mr. Blaine was also of the same opinion, and reported from Baltimore by letter to Mr. Hamlin, the day before the convention, that the talk about a war Democrat did not amount to much, and that he was confident that the old ticket would be renominated. Chandler felt the same, and although he was one of the closest friends Mr. Hamlin ever had in public life, he did not think it necessary to do any work at Baltimore, and was dismayed at the news of Johnson's nomination. Secretary Stanton was likewise surprised. Major Albert E. H. Johnson<sup>1</sup> wrote General Hamlin that Stanton favored the renomination of the old ticket. But enough evidence has been given now to show that Lincoln and his friends expected Mr. Hamlin's renomination. Now let us see what Lincoln did.

The nature of the movement for Mr. Dickinson, however friendly he himself may have been to Mr. Lincoln, eliminated him from the discussion of the President's preference for his associate, and the choice was narrowed down to Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Johnson. The record of Mr. Lincoln's friendship for Mr. Hamlin speaks for itself,

<sup>1</sup> See Major Johnson's comprehensive letter in the Supplement.

and inquiry now turns to Johnson. This is entered on with regret, but the interests of the truth compel an analysis of the relations between President Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. The truth is, Mr. Lincoln had no illusions about Johnson. He knew the real man, and his distrust and dislike of him were founded on a knowledge of his character and record. While Johnson's character as military governor of Tennessee was patriotic, his administration troubled Mr. Lincoln at times, and his personal behavior caused equal apprehension at the White House. Johnson's private habits and his associations with men and women of a certain class were notorious. President Lincoln could not remove Johnson from office without risking trouble in Tennessee; but he was compelled to restrain Johnson, and to this end commissioned General Daniel E. Sickles, a few weeks before the Baltimore convention, to remain at Nashville. General Sickles in authorized interviews explicitly denied that his visit had any connection with the vice-presidency. He refused to publish the whole story; but he did say of Johnson: "His administration was of a character which seemed to Mr. Lincoln to be too harsh."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Lincoln's personal feelings were disclosed by his wife in the following incident which she related to W. H. Herndon, the President's law partner. Speaking of Mr. Lincoln's feelings about Johnson, she said: "He greatly disliked Andrew Johnson. Once the latter, when we were in company, followed us around not a little. It displeased Mr. Lincoln so much that he turned abruptly and asked loud enough to be heard by others, 'Why is this man forever following me?' At another time when we were down at City Point, Johnson, still following us, was drunk. Mr. Lincoln, in desperation, exclaimed, 'For God's sake, don't ask Johnson to dine with us.'"<sup>2</sup>

Another story, related by S. F. Barr, shows how Mr. Lincoln employed his habit of asking questions to lead people to his point of view about Johnson, without committing himself, although another interpretation has been placed on the incident. Thad. Stevens and Simon Cameron were talking with the President about Johnson, and he asked, "Why would not Johnson be a good man to nominate?" Stevens replied in his vigorous, blunt way, "Mr. President, Andrew Johnson is a rank demagogue, and I suspect at heart a damned scoundrel." Mr. Lincoln made no reply.

When the delegates began to pass through Washington on their way to Baltimore, and heard that a sharp contest had sprung up over the vice-presidency, some of them naturally pressed Mr. Lincoln to intimate his choice. But he adhered to his policy of silence, and to no delegate did he express his wishes at that time. The statements

<sup>1</sup> See the *New York Times*, and other newspapers, of July 10 and 11, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> See W. H. Herndon's *Life of Lincoln*.

of several survivors are reviewed comprehensively in another part of this volume, and it only remains to add here that he authorized no man at this juncture to speak for him. He still "expected the old ticket would be renominated," to quote Colonel Nicolay, but also saw the danger of interfering with a body of men, some of whom were working desperately to inflict a blow at his administration. This was not politics on his part; it was statesmanship. He thought that the convention would take "one thing at a time, and the big things first." His renomination, accomplished in spite of the secret opposition, would naturally lead to Mr. Hamlin's. But it happened that some men used his name without authority, though it would be hard now to ascertain who they were, and there were rumors heard at Baltimore that Mr. Lincoln privately favored Johnson. It is easy to see how overzealous friends of candidates would in a moment of excitement make assumptions that were untrue. For this reason Mr. Lincoln acted in order to clear away all doubt as to his position. He confided to trusted friends his wish that Mr. Hamlin should be renominated.

Burton C. Cook, chairman of the Illinois delegation, was President Lincoln's chosen mouthpiece, and his circumstantial statement, known confidential relations with the President, and his own high standing and character, settle Mr. Lincoln's preference for Mr. Hamlin. Mr. Cook had supposed that Mr. Lincoln desired the old ticket renominated, and was puzzled at the stories he heard, and also at the request of Leonard Swett, that the Illinois delegation should cast a complimentary vote for Joseph Holt.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cook asked Colonel John G. Nicolay, who was present, to obtain an explanation. Colonel Nicolay understood the President's position, and accordingly wrote to John Hay, his associate in the White House: "Cook wants to know confidentially whether Swett is all right; whether in urging Holt for Vice-President he reflects the President's wishes; whether the President has any preference, either personal or on the score of policy; or whether he wishes not to interfere even by a confidential intimation." Mr. Lincoln read the letter, and on the back of it wrote this memorandum: "Swett is unquestionably all right. Mr. Holt is a good man, but I had not heard or thought of him for V. P. Wish not to interfere about V. P. Cannot interfere about platform. Convention must judge for itself."<sup>2</sup> Swett's course will be explained later.

Mr. Cook was not entirely satisfied with this statement, and having

<sup>1</sup> Dr. I. A. Powell, an Illinois delegate who knew Swett, said that all he desired was a complimentary vote for Holt. When Swett heard from Mr. Lincoln, through Mr. Cook, he supported Mr. Hamlin. See *Washington Star*, July 18, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolay and Hay's *Life of Lincoln*, vol. ix. p. 73.



long been on intimate terms with Mr. Lincoln, he naturally desired to have personal information from him. He left Baltimore the day before the convention balloted, and saw President Lincoln at the White House. He had a long interview, the story of which he told as follows on July 13, 1891 :<sup>1</sup>—

“President Lincoln did not oppose Mr. Hamlin’s renomination, and the statements of Mr. Nicolay are correct. I have read what the newspapers have said about the statement concerning Hannibal Hamlin and the President, and I can fully verify the denial of it published by Nicolay. . . . When I left the President I was satisfied that he would be content with the nomination of Hamlin ; in fact, I feel that he really desired it. If Lincoln had in any way expressed an unequivocal wish that Hamlin or any one else be nominated, the convention would have proceeded on those lines. When they asked me about it, I told them to watch the Illinois delegation and to go the way we did, and that the President would be satisfied with the action. Hamlin led the convention and would have carried it, too, had it not been for one thing. Horace Maynard, of Tennessee, arose at a critical point and made a rattling speech for Johnson. He spoke in the most passionate way of the great sufferings that had been endured by Union men living in the South. It was that speech by Maynard that defeated Hamlin, and by no means any desire on the part of the President.”

There were other men of weight and national prominence who also investigated the story of Lincoln’s preference for Johnson when the convention was being held. One was Austin Blair, the well known war governor of Michigan. He said in an interview of July, 1891,<sup>2</sup> that he was a delegate at large from his State, and was chairman of a committee appointed to investigate the report that Lincoln wanted “Andy” Johnson for Vice-President. “I distinctly remember,” said Governor Blair, “that the committee’s report was unanimous that Mr. Lincoln had taken no part for Mr. Hamlin, or against his nomination, nor for anybody else. . . . No, Mr. Lincoln was not opposed at any time to the nomination of Mr. Hamlin.”

The result of President Lincoln’s private declaration to Mr. Cook, and the investigation, was that the Illinois delegation stood by Mr. Hamlin and refused to make a change for Johnson until Maine had. Moreover, Leonard Swett, having learned that Mr. Lincoln had decided to interfere in behalf of Mr. Hamlin, proceeded to labor earnestly and loyally for the renomination of the old ticket. His faith-

<sup>1</sup> See newspapers of this date for Associated Press dispatches giving this interview in full.

<sup>2</sup> See the *New York Sun* and *Brooklyn Eagle* of July 11, 1891, the *Chicago Post* of July 12, and other newspapers, for this interview in its entirety.

ful friend and confidant, Josiah H. Drummond, has testified fully to Mr. Swett's loyalty to Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin. Drummond and Swett were born in Maine, grew up together, were classmates at college, and corresponded until the latter's death. At the convention they conferred every other hour, and on Mr. Drummond's authority it is announced that Leonard Swett was true to Mr. Hamlin.<sup>1</sup>

The proceedings of the convention demonstrate that Johnson's nomination was brought about by a series of incidents that originated among Lincoln's opponents, and were successfully guided by the play of circumstances in the contest between Seward's friends and enemies, with the sentiment for a war Democrat as the ostensible animating cause. The first important issue brought before the convention was the reception or rejection of certain Southern delegations that claimed seats, and these came from Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Thad. Stevens, Simon Cameron, and other of Mr. Hamlin's friends took the ground that they should not be admitted, since the States they represented, with the exception of Missouri, would not cast a vote in the electoral college. But the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Drummond, in a personal interview with the author, expressed amazement at the unwarranted statement that Leonard Swett intrigued against Mr. Hamlin. "He was as true as steel," said Mr. Drummond. "Illinois adhered to Hamlin throughout, and utterly refused to change its vote from him until after Maine had changed her vote. I was in constant consultation with Swett, and I had not then, and never have had since, the slightest reason to believe that he had any knowledge of any views or wishes on Lincoln's part that any other man than Hamlin should be nominated. It is true that Swett told me at the time that Lincoln's position was that he could take no part whatever in the nomination for Vice-President, or indeed in any matter that might come before the convention." *Portland Express*, July 16, 1891.

There is a mass of convincing evidence furnished by many other delegates completely exploding the story that President Lincoln was responsible for Johnson's nomination. Several were of national prominence. The most comprehensive and conclusive review of the convention the historian will find on this point was furnished by James S. T. Stranahan to the *Brooklyn Eagle* of July 12, 1891. He rejected the story attributing the selection of Johnson to Lincoln, and charged it to the division in the New York delegation and to other influences, such as Horace Maynard's impassioned speech and the sentiment of recognizing the Southern Union element. He himself was Mr. Hamlin's friend, and in the interview he explicitly said that he and others were reluctantly overborne in the New York quarrel to support Johnson in order to defeat Dickinson. He declined to explain the inside causes or meaning of the Dickinson movement for fear of involving other men and issues. Mr. Stranahan added that his vote for Johnson was one of the mistakes of his life. Other important interviews repelling the same story were given to the *Boston Traveler* of July, 1891, by ex-Governor Claflin, Stephen H. Phillips, A. J. Waterman, Moses Kimball, B. W. Harris, and Frank B. Fay. More to the point is the charge made by Robert Gardner, a delegate from California, in the *San Francisco Bulletin* of July 12, 1891, that Johnson's nomination was due to Seward, Weed, Brownlow, Raymond, and others.

patriotism of the brave and devoted men who had supported the Union cause in the disaffected States had intrenched them within the affections of the North, and in this case the convention was governed by the heart rather than by its head. Yet it is doubtful if they would have been admitted had the issue not been connected with the contest over the vice-presidency. The committee to whom this was referred reported against the delegates, but Preston King, who was chairman, and who had been embroiled in the fight against Seward, made a minority report in their favor. To quote Mr. Stranahan: "King and Dickinson were not on the best of terms, and there was some unfriendly feeling, too, between the former supporters and antagonists of Mr. Seward."<sup>1</sup>

When King made his report, Horace Maynard, of Tennessee, followed with an impassioned speech in behalf of the Southern Union men and Johnson. He described the heroism of his compatriots in words that thrilled the audience, and he aroused the delegates to a high pitch of enthusiasm when he spoke of Andrew Johnson as a man who "stood in the furnace of treason." This graphic figure of speech expressed the feelings the convention had for the loyal Union leaders, and it undoubtedly carried many wavering delegates over to the Johnson column. No matter what actual merit this speech may possess, it has passed into history as a political classic, and the evidence is conclusive that it had a decisive effect on the convention. The statements of well-known men who were present, such as Mr. Stranahan, Mr. Drummond, Mr. Cook, and many others, bear witness to this. The testimony of Theodore Tilton, who was then the brilliant editor of "The Independent," is of interest. Writing to General Hamlin, from Mentone, France, on March 31, 1896, Mr. Tilton said: "I was present at the nominating convention, and can testify that the substitution of Andrew Johnson for Hannibal Hamlin was done through the urgency of the Tennessee delegates, particularly Judge Maynard, on the ground that Johnson's popularity as the loyal governor of a border State would strengthen the Republican ticket throughout the North. It was a case of practical politics, and involved no reflections on your father's name or qualifications. I need not tell you that many thousands of Republican voters — after President Johnson's impeachment and narrow escape from conviction — confessed with sorrow and shame that the old ticket of Lincoln and Hamlin ought never to have been altered."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 12, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> The distribution of the votes to admit or reject the Southern delegation disproves the theory that there was a widespread "conspiracy" or "plot" to nominate Johnson. An examination of the official report of the convention drawn up by D. F. Murphy, and published by Baker & Godwin, of New York city, shows



When it was time to nominate the ticket, the Johnson and anti-Lincoln men had become unruly, and the presiding officer — Governor Dennison, of Ohio — complicated the situation by losing his head.<sup>1</sup> There was sharp manœuvring to get the floor. Simon Cameron endeavored to anticipate all other aspirants. He sent a resolution in writing to the chair, calling on the convention to renominate the old ticket. The supporters of Johnson and the opponents of Lincoln joined in a tumultuous outcry, and, to restore peace, Cameron withdrew his resolution. A call of the States was decided on, and President Lincoln was renominated with only the votes of Missouri against him. The vice-presidency was now acted on. Cameron presented Mr. Hamlin's name. There was great excitement, and the vote of each State as announced was greeted with wild cheers. Mr. Hamlin was at first in the lead despite the break among the anti-Lincoln men in the New England delegations. When Illinois was reached, and Burton C. Cook threw its vote for Mr. Hamlin, this was recognized as signifying President Lincoln's personal preference, and Mr. Hamlin's friends thought that he was sure of a renomination. But it is the unexpected that happens, and Mr. Hamlin was cheated out of the vice-presidency, and the presidency also, by the unscrupulous action of William M. Stone, then governor of Iowa. He falsified the vote of his State and turned the tide to Johnson.

When Iowa was called, Stone jumped to his feet quick as a flash, usurped the functions of the chairman of his delegation, and cast the vote of Iowa for Andrew Johnson, — sixteen votes. The delegation was divided between Messrs. Hamlin, Dickinson, and Johnson, and the night before had elected Daniel D. Chase its chairman and spokesman in spite of the desire of Stone to fill these functions himself. The sentiment of the Iowa delegation was therefore unfavorable to Johnson, and it was known to the contending parties. Thus this

that the division in various States was at variance with their vote on the vice-presidency. New York, for example, voted 66 ayes; Massachusetts, 26 noes; Indiana, 24 ayes, 2 noes; Maine, 3 ayes, 11 noes; Pennsylvania, 31 ayes, 21 noes; New Hampshire, 10 noes; Illinois, 32 ayes. New York, Illinois, Indiana, and other States changed their vote before the result had been announced. Their first ballots revealed a strong division. New York, for instance, stood 48 ayes, 18 noes; Indiana, 18 ayes, 8 noes. Thus it will be perceived that Illinois, which supported Mr. Hamlin, favored seating these delegations, while New York, which was unanimous, was badly divided on the vice-presidency. These are specimen illustrations, and a further examination of the votes of other States furnishes more evidence to the same point. The delegates from Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas were admitted with the right to vote, while those of Virginia and Florida were received on the floor without the right to vote. North Carolina was excluded. Thus, Johnson had a clear gift of 15 votes from Tennessee, 10 from Arkansas, and 7 from Louisiana, or 32 in all.

<sup>1</sup> *Washington in Lincoln's Time*, p. 154, by Noah Brooks, an eye-witness.

apparent reversal of decision misled the convention, and although Chairman Chase, Peter Melendy, and other Iowa delegates sprang up and tried to expose Stone's outrageous fraud, in the confusion they failed to get recognition from the chair and the tide rose for Johnson. Simon Cameron momentarily checked the flood by throwing Pennsylvania's vote for Mr. Hamlin, and the first ballot gave Johnson 200, Hamlin, 150, Dickinson 108, with a scattering divided among Butler, Rousseau, and others. The confusion continued, and with Governor Dennison still rattled the Iowa men could not expose Stone's rascality. While they were shouting for recognition and denouncing Stone, as the balloting ended, Kentucky, supposing Johnson was honestly in the lead, changed her vote, and, to use a political expression, the procession of States to the Johnson column began, and he was nominated.<sup>1</sup>

That there was a vulgar conspiracy to defraud Mr. Hamlin out of a renomination is clearly shown by the facts. Although Stone was governor of Iowa, yet he had fallen so greatly in the favor of his party that he was unable to obtain an election as a delegate to the convention. Iowa, moreover, favored the renomination of the old ticket. Stone, however, begged so hard for a vindication that he was allowed to go to Baltimore as an alternate, and was taken into the delegation when a vacancy ensued. He called on President Lincoln and sought to extort some expression from him favorable to Johnson. He admitted in his long, rambling story<sup>2</sup> of this interview that he received no intimation whatever that Lincoln was for Johnson. But he nevertheless industriously spread the impression that President Lincoln favored Johnson; and the audacious fraud he perpetrated on

<sup>1</sup> The distribution of votes on the first ballot was as follows: Johnson: New Hampshire 1, Vermont 5, Massachusetts 2, Connecticut 12, New York 32, New Jersey 2, Maryland 2, Louisiana 7, Arkansas 10, Missouri 2, Tennessee 15, Ohio 42, Indiana 26, Wisconsin 2, Iowa 16, California 5, West Virginia 10, Kansas 2, Nebraska 3, and Nevada 6. Hamlin: Maine 14, New Hampshire 4, Vermont 2, Massachusetts 3, Rhode Island, 3, New York 6, Pennsylvania, 52, Maryland 1, Illinois 32, Michigan 16, Wisconsin 4, Minnesota 5, California 5, Kansas 2, and Nebraska 1. Dickinson: New Hampshire 3, Vermont 1, Massachusetts 17, Rhode Island, 1, New York 28, New Jersey 12, Delaware 6, Maryland 11, Louisiana 7, Wisconsin 10, Minnesota 3, Kansas 2, Nebraska 1, and Colorado 6. Butler: Massachusetts 2, Rhode Island 2, Missouri 20. Rousseau: Kentucky 21. Burnside: Rhode Island 2. Colfax: Oregon 6. Holt: Massachusetts 2. This gave Johnson a lead of 50 votes and insured his nomination. Kentucky at once changed her vote and gave it to Johnson. Oregon threw him 6 more and Kansas the same. At this point Johnson had 233 votes, and as these changes, accompanied by enthusiastic demonstrations, unmistakably pointed to Johnson's nomination, Simon Cameron then gave up the contest and Pennsylvania joined the Johnson procession. The final result was Johnson 494, Dickinson 17, and Hamlin 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Washington Post*, July 20, 1891.

the Iowa delegation demonstrates the utter worthlessness of his word and also his willingness to lend himself to the base purposes of base men. The entire story of this wretched conspiracy will never be known. One incident, however, may be added. A teller informed Mr. Hamlin that he heard a Johnson man exclaim before Illinois had voted: "Hamlin is ahead. Something must be done to head him off." Several Johnson men at once hurried from the platform to the floor of the convention, and shortly after Stone falsified the vote of Iowa, although it cannot be asserted that there was any connection between these acts.

There is overwhelming evidence that Stone falsified Iowa's vote. Congressman N. C. Deering of that State attended the convention as Mr. Hamlin's friend, and gave the facts presented. He also polled the delegation and said that the majority were for the old ticket. For the detailed account offered, the author is indebted to Peter Melendy, a delegate from the sixth Iowa district, afterwards United States marshal and also mayor of Cedar Rapids, and a man of high standing in Iowa. Mr. Melendy's authentic written account was placed in possession of Charles Aldrich, curator of the Historical Department of Iowa. In this Mr. Melendy showed that Stone twice falsified the vote of Iowa. The first time was when Allen, of Indiana, presented Johnson's name. Stone jumped up and shouted: "Iowa seconds Indiana's nomination." He was severely rebuked, but tricked the delegation when the vote was called for. Mr. Melendy thought the vote would have stood, Hamlin 4, Dickinson 4, Johnson 8. He was for Dickinson, and he thought that Johnson would have received no votes if Stone had not been on the delegation. Mr. Aldrich, one of the oldest editors in Iowa, and a man of prominence, wrote the author, May 17, 1898: "The State of Iowa was very united in favor of the old ticket, — Lincoln and Hamlin. The nomination of Johnson was a surprise, and an unwelcome one." James Harlan, the friend of Lincoln and appointed to his Cabinet, wrote Mr. Aldrich May 10, 1898: "My impression as to the facts is that the Iowa delegates were almost unanimous in favor of the nomination of Hamlin until they were made to believe that President Lincoln had said that he thought that it would be wise to nominate a war Democrat. . . . I do not know that Mr. Lincoln ever made such a statement. . . . I do know that Mr. Lincoln was a stanch friend of Mr. Hamlin."

There was another important disclosure made a few days after the convention that furnished the key to Johnson's nomination. General Charles Hamlin happened to be passing through Baltimore, and there met Frank B. Fay, one of the Massachusetts delegates, who has since been mayor of Chelsea and the agent of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children — a man of high



character. General Hamlin was well acquainted with Mr. Fay, having often seen him at his headquarters in the Army of the Potomac. Knowing that Mr. Fay was a delegate to the convention, General Hamlin asked him this question : "Why was my father retired from the presidential ticket?"

Mr. Fay replied in substance : —

"Charles Sumner and the Massachusetts delegation desired another candidate. They were not opposed to Mr. Hamlin for personal reasons. Mr. Sumner desired to prevent William Pitt Fessenden from returning to the Senate. He thought that the best way to accomplish this would be to nominate a new man for Vice-President, because he thought that Mr. Hamlin would be returned by the people of Maine to the Senate, and Mr. Fessenden would be retired to private life. Mr. Sumner appealed to the Massachusetts delegates, and insisted that they should advocate the nomination of a war Democrat for Vice-President in order to bring more Democrats to the support of the Republican ticket. The majority of Massachusetts delegates voted for Daniel S. Dickinson. Ginery Twitchell and I voted for Joseph Holt. The Massachusetts men had no objection to Mr. Hamlin on any personal score, but acted in accordance with Mr. Sumner's desires and wishes."<sup>1</sup>

The Hon. Henry L. Dawes, for many years the senior senator from Massachusetts and Mr. Hamlin's lifelong friend, wrote General Hamlin from Springfield on April 18, 1896, in part as follows : —

"You have the correct idea of what influenced the Massachusetts delegation in the course they pursued at the convention. It was so understood at the time, and I have never had any occasion to doubt it. After the convention the two delegates from my congressional district came over to Washington and called on me. I was not in a very pleasant mood over what had been done and the agency our delegation had had in it, and berated them right roundly. Their justification was along the lines indicated in your letter [Sumner's course]. They left me, to call on Mr. Sumner, and on their return said to me rather exultingly, 'What do you think Mr. Sumner says about it? He says he only wished that the ticket was turned around'" (Johnson and Lincoln).

The most comprehensive and authoritative confidential report that was made to Mr. Hamlin came from Senator Morrill, of Maine, who with Senator Fessenden worked in the convention to secure the re-nomination of the old ticket. Mr. Morrill wrote Mr. Hamlin on June 9, the day after the convention, when all the details were fresh in his mind. He said : —

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fay authorized the publication of this interview in a letter to General Hamlin of August 19, 1896, after reading the manuscript.

"You know the result. I take an early moment to state the controlling influences which led to it. Monday night at ten o'clock Pennsylvania, under lead of Mr. Cameron, had declared her solid vote for you. New York stood 28 for you, the balance between Dickinson and Johnson. New Jersey voted for you; Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, for you. Iowa divided for you and Johnson. Illinois expressed her favor for the old ticket, but did not like to interfere. Ohio held back for Todd in a contingency. Maryland and Delaware would vote for you.

"It seemed a sure thing. I called upon the Massachusetts delegation and heard that they had been together, had made no nomination, and was told that they would do you no harm, but wanted to wait a little. It indicated you in time. So Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York waited expression with Massachusetts.

"Tuesday morning early I learned from Mr. Weed that gentlemen from the Massachusetts delegation had late the night before called upon their delegation [New York], had said to them that the Massachusetts delegates were opposed to you, and would take the lead for Dickinson. They threw the New York delegation into confusion. Those who had voted for you were willing to go for Dickinson, and upon the representation that New England would not support you, but could not hold their men for Dickinson except upon a new man, and therefore went for Johnson. The Massachusetts delegation had made some revelation to Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, and other delegations, and the result was that those States changed their support to others. I hoped that this would still leave you in a plurality on the first ballot, although the division of New England was made great use of with Western delegations.

"On the ballot at the start you had 145 [150], Johnson somewhat more, the balance being divided between Dickinson and some three or four others. As the Western States were called, Johnson went ahead, showing a majority. When Pennsylvania asked to change her vote for Johnson, others followed. Following Pennsylvania and those who had been with us, we gave our vote to Johnson.

"Illinois held her vote, and soon gave it to you, changing to Johnson after we had voted.

"There was really no feeling of opposition to you, but there was a sort of feeling that something might be done to strengthen the war Democrats. Massachusetts delegates were of this opinion, and unwisely, in bad taste, and in an underhand way endeavored to divide New England and take the lead for Dickinson.

"It was their efforts and representations that New England was not for you that broke up New York, and transferred your vote for Dickinson; so that of New Jersey, Maryland, and others. Todd, of

Ohio, was active with Massachusetts delegation, thinking that it [the vice-presidency] might come to Ohio. I censure [the] Massachusetts delegation for not standing by New England, as would have been the propriety of the thing and the decency of the thing, and which would have given New England some power over the question for you — a sure thing. I do not doubt but for the movement of Massachusetts you would have gone through. Connecticut was against you, but that would not have damaged us much, as she is generally with New York.

“Massachusetts intrigued for Dickinson with New York. That broke up the order of things for you. We then were committed to chance. To keep Seward in the Cabinet his friends would take [the] Vice-President out of New York, and went for Johnson, not supposing he would be nominated on [the] first ballot. The Massachusetts delegates are not pleased with the result, and those with whom I have talked think they did not act wisely.

“I wish I could feel that we had not made a *bad* mistake. We have two Western men for candidates, and one of them in an insurrectionary State.”

President Lincoln's personal attitude now furnishes the final proof of his preference for the old ticket. Major Albert E. H. Johnson, a lawyer of high standing and character, long connected with the Washington bar, was Mr. Stanton's private secretary. His positive and circumstantial account of the government's secret telegraph service proves that President Lincoln sent no dispatches directing the action of the Baltimore convention, or received any from confidential agents asking for instructions on the vice-presidency.<sup>1</sup> But more important was Mr. Lincoln's conduct and words when he learned of Johnson's nomination. There was a group of brilliant young men in Mr. Stanton's confidential service at this time, who have since risen to prominence in the electrical world, — Thomas T. Eckert, Charles A. Tinker, Albert B. Chandler, and D. Homer Bates. General Eckert became president of the Western Union Telegraph Company, Mr. Tinker the general superintendent, and Mr. Chandler president of the Postal Telegraph Company. General Eckert and Mr. Tinker were both in the telegraph office at Mr. Stanton's office when Mr. Lincoln received the dispatch announcing Johnson's nomination. At the time they made note of the fact that President Lincoln's attitude was that of a disappointed, even disgusted man, and they related the incident to their colleagues and others.

Two incidents plainly demonstrate President Lincoln's disgust at having Johnson for an associate. Noah Brooks, who was anxious to

<sup>1</sup> See elaborate interviews in the *Washington Evening Star* of July 12, 1891, and *New York Evening Post* of July 13, 1891.



have Mr. Hamlin renominated, was warranted by his long acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln in approaching him on this subject. But he found the President "rigidly non-committal," and "he could not be induced to express any opinion on the subject of the selection of a candidate for Vice-President."<sup>1</sup> Yet after the convention, when Mr. Brooks once more saw Mr. Lincoln, "he was then willing to admit that he would have been gratified if Mr. Hamlin could have been renominated." While Mr. Brooks was at the convention, the emergency arose that compelled the President to interfere and depart from his non-committal policy. Mr. Brooks added, by way of comment, "I have always been confident that Lincoln, left to himself, would have chosen that the old ticket of 1860 — Lincoln and Hamlin — should be placed in the field. It is reasonable to suppose that he had resolved to leave the convention entirely free in its choice of a candidate for the second place on the ticket." In connection with this, Mr. Brooks placed in evidence the testimony of General Thomas T. Eckert, the explicit meaning of which is known only to the historians. The facts are as follows: President Lincoln came to the military telegraph bureau after he had learned of his own renomination, to find out who was to be his associate. The men present were Major Eckert and Charles A. Tinker. Major Eckert handed him the dispatch announcing Johnson's nomination, and, to quote from Mr. Brooks's interesting book, Lincoln, on learning that Johnson was the nominee for Vice-President, "made an exclamation that emphatically indicated his disappointment thereat. Major Eckert afterwards confirmed this statement with a hearty laugh."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Tinker also supplied more information that shows Mr. Lincoln was displeased over the news, and did not act like one who had favored Johnson. Mr. Tinker received the dispatch from the wire, and the President's doubting manner and words made so strong an impression on him that he stepped into Major Johnson's room and related to him what he had heard and seen. He said that Mr. Lincoln, after reading the telegram, soliloquized aloud: —

"Well, I thought possibly he might be the man. Perhaps he is the best man — but" — Mr. Lincoln did not finish the sentence. He passed out of the office, leaving Mr. Tinker "impressed with the significance of the unfinished sentence, which in the light of subsequent events became a thrilling prophecy."<sup>3</sup>

This completes the record of the convention. Senator Morrill's letter proves that the final action of the Massachusetts delegation

<sup>1</sup> *Washington in Lincoln's Time*, pp. 151, 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Abraham Lincoln — Tributes from his Associates*, from *The Independent*, p. 160.

was a surprise, and Mr. Drummond's statement that Sumner was sent for shows that he determined that result. Simon Cameron's confidential account to Mr. Hamlin, a few weeks after the convention, placed the responsibility for the nomination of Johnson on Massachusetts and New York. He did not then know of Sumner's course, but was aware of the fact that there was an intrigue. Mr. Hamlin repeated the substance of the interview to his son Charles, and said, "Cameron was true to me." He said the same thing in later years, and never doubted his friend's loyalty. Cameron said to Mr. Drummond at the time he cast Pennsylvania's vote for Johnson, that there was no use in prolonging the contest, and to Congressman John Scull of his delegation he remarked, "The Republican party has made a great mistake." The story "Ben" Butler told, that Lincoln offered him the vice-presidency, will be believed only by those who believed in that extraordinary character. He said that he declined. But when did the public know Butler to decline any political office? The alleged interview with Cameron corroborating this yarn was written by a reporter whose Copperhead affiliations and miserable habits discredit him. Cameron knew how to manœuvre candidates to divide the field, and Butler was a pawn to hold Massachusetts delegates from going to Dickinson.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence presented proves that President Lincoln not only desired the renomination of the old ticket, but also expected it up to the last moment, when he intervened and sought to accomplish it. The final judgment of men who were actually on the scene, and were

<sup>1</sup> Butler's friends pushed him for the nomination. A. H. Bullock, afterwards governor of Massachusetts, favored him, but the Massachusetts delegates refused to support him. He received two votes from his own State. See statement of Stephen H. Phillips in the *Boston Traveler*, July 13, 1891. The query arises, Would Lincoln favor a man who could command no support in his own State? The impression the Butler story made on reliable and honest-minded men may be judged from this extract from Senator Dawes's letter to General Hamlin, before mentioned. He wrote of Mr. Lincoln and the war Democrats: "He was very anxious to broaden out the basis of the Republican party by bringing into its ranks all the 'war Democrats' he possibly could. On this subject I had frequent talks with him. On a special occasion, when Frank Blair, Jr., got into trouble in the House of Representatives, and his case was referred to a committee of which I was chairman, Mr. Lincoln sent for me, and went at length over the whole matter of what should be our policy towards such war Democrats as the three Blairs, General Butler, and others of that stripe. I did after that what I could in getting that kind of persons into our ranks. I always thought that those responsible for the result we are considering made use of this known sentiment of Mr. Lincoln as to war Democrats in general to aid them in carrying out their particular projects, and that this was all the connection Mr. Lincoln ever had with it. You know the story General Butler was in the habit of telling. . . . There is no amount of evidence sufficient to make me believe that Mr. Lincoln ever wanted General Butler on the ticket."

known to be the friends of the President and Vice-President, is important. One prominent figure is John Conness, who was senator from California, but who subsequently removed to Massachusetts. He was Mr. Hamlin's friend, and he knew the facts. He wrote General Hamlin on February 21, 1896:—

“When the Baltimore convention renominated Mr. Lincoln for the first office, and put the name of Andrew Johnson in the place of Hannibal Hamlin, I was surprised and pained. . . . The movement had its origin in New England, . . . and a movement was made for Daniel S. Dickinson, of New York, as the ideal war Democrat, but this was met with opposition from Mr. Seward and Mr. Weed, who could not afford to build up Mr. Dickinson in their State. . . . To attribute this work to Abraham Lincoln is little less than cruel; for it was not in his line, and did not comport with his character or motives. No man living had better opportunity to know Lincoln's mind than Noah Brooks. He had those close relations of friendship and confidence with the good President which enabled him to know his mind thoroughly. Your father was one of the many pure and noble men of the period that it was my fortune to know, and his memory is very dear to me.”

The words of Senator Conness are a dignified and significant rebuke to the eleventh-hour theory that President Lincoln conceived and executed the plan to drop Mr. Hamlin from the ticket, and that the latter was hostile to Mr. Lincoln. Their friendship is traditional and sacred in the eyes of those who were admitted to their confidence. Their cordial relations were widely commented on at the time as an exception to the rule, and to the end of Mr. Hamlin's life he remained in the public eye Lincoln's friend and counselor. The public well knew that if Mr. Hamlin had opposed President Lincoln, or had been a member of a cabal, the country would have known of it. When he fought it was in the open field. His opposition to Presidents Tyler, Polk, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, Johnson, and Hayes was as outspoken as his support of Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Arthur, and Harrison. It is hardly necessary to say to those who knew Mr. Hamlin, that he never would have allowed the public to rest under any misapprehensions concerning his relations with Mr. Lincoln. His word that he was Mr. Lincoln's friend was sufficient for those who understood him, and they well know that honest criticism was not hostility.

But of all the honorable and fair-minded men who surrounded the President and Vice-President, what one ever reflected on the relations between them? What did the trustworthy historians who were on the scene say? Blaine, who was one of Mr. Lincoln's managers, and who was at the convention, graphically described the controlling influ-



ences in his "Twenty Years of Congress," and attributed the selection of Johnson to the Seward-Dickinson feud and the sentiment for a war Democrat, and he added, "The whole country saw that the grounds upon which Mr. Hamlin was superseded were not in derogation of the honorable record he had made in his long and faithful career."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Blaine knew the facts. But more important than this is the explicit statement of F. W. Seward, son of the secretary, in his "Seward at Washington:" "Vice-President Hamlin retained the confidence of the party, and there was no ground of objection to his renomination also. But it was thought wise to endeavor to draw additional support to the ticket by nominating a war Democrat for the second place. Daniel S. Dickinson was proposed and warmly urged, but it was finally decided to give stronger emphasis to the action by taking Andrew Johnson, who was not only a war Democrat but a Southern Unionist."<sup>2</sup> This is a diplomatic revelation of Mr. Seward's position, that he had no objection to Mr. Hamlin, but was compelled by circumstances in the fight against him to take up Johnson. There is no intimation that Mr. Lincoln was involved in this. It is the testimony of the fair-minded historian.<sup>3</sup>

In one of Mr. Hamlin's later speeches in the Senate he enunciated his belief that a man was known both by the friends and enemies he made. Mr. Hamlin's friends are known, and have testified. Now a few words about his enemies. One at this time was the Secretary of the Navy. He was a false friend, and pursued Mr. Hamlin with the traditional bitterness of that kind of a man. He not only influenced the Connecticut delegates against Mr. Hamlin as much as he could, but also made personal reflections on him in after years. He kept a diary from which he published some records that were colored and magni-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 552.

<sup>2</sup> P. 225.

<sup>3</sup> Of the remaining distinguished men who can speak with authority concerning the Lincoln administration, there are few whose word carries as much weight with the public and the historians as that of George W. Julian, of Indiana. He was a radical member of the House, and was brought into intimate relations with both the President and Vice-President. His service on the Committee on the Conduct of the War afforded him peculiar opportunities to know the actual relations between Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Lincoln. He wrote the author, from Irvington, on June 27, 1897:—

"The story about your grandfather's secret opposition to Lincoln is new to me. I do not give it any credit, and I can think of no reason for such opposition. I always understood him to be most friendly to Lincoln. . . . As to the Chase movement in 1864, it was very formidable at one time, and very many men wished it well who did not feel inclined to join it openly. The public does not know, and never will know, the extent and bitterness of the feeling at that time against Lincoln. I took note of it at the time in my journal, and in referring to it I am astonished at what I say. But it has no reference to your grandfather, and it would astonish everybody to-day if it were published."

fied by his personal dislike of Mr. Hamlin, and thereby discount other utterances not yet given to the public. But this was well understood at the time. Blaine, who knew of the actual relations between Welles and Hamlin, described him as a man who "possessed a strong intellect, but manifested little warmth of feeling or personal attachment for any one. He was a man of high character, but full of prejudices and a good hater. He wrote well, but was disposed to dip his pen in gall." Another enemy was an assistant secretary of war, whose singularly perverse disposition to see honest men in unspeakable criminals such as "Boss" Tweed, and dishonest men in Presidents such as Grant and Cleveland, renders his ideas about Mr. Hamlin an unintentional tribute to the sincerity of his devotion to Lincoln. Mr. Hamlin could not have chosen better enemies to supplement the opinions of his friends.

Thus the evidence presented clearly exonerates President Lincoln from connection with the nomination of Johnson, and shows that the theory that he was responsible for it was based on the uncertain foundation of hearsay, assumption, and malice. The curious feature of the affair was the illustration it afforded of the desire men had to shine in the rising sun of Lincoln's brightening fame. Any slight pretext served their purpose to thrust themselves before the public as the "confidential friends" of the martyr President. But as their stories are all based on a false premise, they are easily toppled over, though it is not worth the space to analyze them in this narrative of fact. One of the pillars in this weak structure of gossip, artifice, and imagination was the assumption that Henry J. Raymond was delegated by Mr. Lincoln to work for Johnson at the convention. While Mr. Raymond may have expressed the opinion that Lincoln favored Johnson, it is very doubtful if he ever told anybody in direct terms that Lincoln actually informed him of this in so many words. There is an important difference. Raymond's actual knowledge of President Lincoln's position and preferences may now be definitely settled. It is announced herewith on the authority of Noah Brooks that the day before the convention Henry J. Raymond asked him this question: "Do you know who is Lincoln's choice for Vice-President? I cannot find out." This supports Nicolay and Hay. Lincoln did not wish to interfere.

With the documentary evidence thus presented, and the testimony of living men in corroboration, it is inconceivable how President Lincoln could have worked out a plot to nominate Johnson, though his pure and honest character itself forbids the supposition. But every detail was investigated, and the result is that Lincoln, Cameron, Swett, Sickles, and all others who were said to be in it are exonerated. Even the juvenile theory that Swett used Judge Holt as a foil was examined,

and it was disproved by Judge Holt's statement alone, which was to the effect that he had no knowledge of any such plan. This trick to gull the public by the unwarranted use of Leonard Swett's name was effectually exposed by Mr. Drummond, and it is ridiculous in light of the fact that Judge Holt received only two votes in the convention. He was not even a candidate. It remained for a Philadelphia politician in control of a newspaper to assert that he was "President Lincoln's confidential adviser, and saw him at all times and all hours." The impression his story made on sober-minded and truthful newspapers, as exemplified in the "New York Tribune," may be judged of the two laconic comments the "Tribune" made on this claim. One was: "Mr. Lincoln may or may not have desired Mr. Hamlin's renomination, but the 'Tribune' does not believe that he lied about it." The other, which was equally happy, was: "Mr. Lincoln appeared to have more confidential advisers than George Washington had nurses." <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hamlin remained in public life many years after his retirement from the vice-presidency, and during that time he was associated with many men who, with him, knew the real Lincoln, — Stanton, Chandler, Blaine, Washburne, Fessenden, Morrill, Cameron, Stevens, Wade, Sumner, Wilson, Trumbull, Doolittle, and many others. The most of these men knew how Andrew Johnson was nominated, and that President Lincoln had no part in it. While it was a delicate subject to approach, yet if Mr. Lincoln had been the cause of Johnson's nomination, Mr. Hamlin's friends would have told him. But they knew the truth, and, without anticipating, it may be said that during the stormy days of Johnson's impeachment and the troubles over the first Grant administration, there were some encounters behind the scenes in the Senate the public men never heard of, and which it would not be best to reveal entirely. It is sufficient to say that Fessenden and Chandler openly charged Sumner with being responsible for Johnson's elevation to the presidency, and heaped some awful reproaches on his head. Thus Mr. Hamlin believed until the last that Lincoln was true to him. Once, when he was an old man, and no longer had a firm grip on himself, he was astonished to hear a Mr. Pettis, of Pennsylvania, say that Lincoln whispered to him that Johnson was his choice. He wrote a polite note, saying that he was "sorry to be disabused;" but when he thought over Lincoln's great kindness and loyalty to him, he said to his wife: "Pettis must have imagined he heard Lincoln say that. I am sorry I wrote him. Lincoln was my friend; I am sure of it."

<sup>1</sup> See also editorials in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* of July 10, 1891, the *New York Evening Post*, *Boston Advertiser*, and other like journals, rejecting this person and his stories.



Mr. Hamlin's knowledge of President Lincoln's character, faith in him as a friend, and information of the inside workings of the Baltimore convention were sufficient to cause him to reject this story; and at the same time his belief that Lincoln was true to him was positively confirmed by the appearance of the official record of his administration, written by his faithful literary executors, — John G. Nicolay and John Hay, afterwards ambassador of the United States at the court of St. James and secretary of state in President McKinley's Cabinet. A striking proof of Mr. Hamlin's faith was the journey he took to New York in the evening of his old age, to ask the nation to make Lincoln's birthday a holiday, which is an interesting incident by itself. While the country long ago accepted this record of Lincoln's administration as authoritative, Mr. Hamlin's opinion of it is not inappropos. In one of the very few newspaper interviews he authorized, he said to E. J. Edwards, a journalist of high standing and character: "I have been reading that Life of Mr. Lincoln which was written by Colonel Nicolay and Major Hay. I have read it carefully from beginning to end, and I often take it up, and read and reread some passages contained in it, which suggest to me some of the most solemn and tender memories of my official life. . . . I think that Colonel Nicolay and Major Hay's book is the Life of Lincoln which will remain. . . . The statements contained in it are accurate. . . . In my own case the reading confirms and strengthens the impression which I first had concerning Mr. Lincoln's character." <sup>1</sup>

Mr. Nicolay has voluntarily rendered history an important service in reviewing stories that would represent the Emancipator in a false light.<sup>2</sup> He demonstrates with ease that on their face these stories of the politicians are inconsistent and improbable. His review authoritatively closes the incident, and is another warning that history always overtakes the untruth. The review is a grave where men fell whose desire for "reflected greatness" overcame their discretion, and tempted them to present themselves as authoritative witnesses even at the expense of Lincoln's honor, and in the face of an array of weighty names and overwhelming evidence. Mr. Hamlin died in the full belief that Abraham Lincoln's life was unsullied by an act or word, and this must be the verdict of all time.

<sup>1</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, February 26, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> See Supplement by John G. Nicolay, and also letter by John Hay in support.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### COLLECTOR OF BOSTON

MR. HAMLIN appeared to suffer no loss of prestige in his party nor to be deeply wounded at his retirement from the presidential ticket. He accepted the action of the convention and supported Lincoln and Johnson with characteristic loyalty, whatever he may have thought of the causes of his displacement. Indeed, he took advantage of the first opportunity presented to signify his approbation of the ticket. This was in a speech he made on June 11, at the ratification meeting held in Bangor. He spoke of Lincoln as one "whom the people loved" and "who had been renominated, and would be reelected in obedience to their will." He repeated his well-known belief that "the President was a man of eminent abilities, of rare and unsurpassed integrity," and predicted that "he would administer the government wisely and well, and lead the nation out of its present difficulty and plant it on the eternal principle of liberty."

Mr. Hamlin was not unmindful of the fact that "many had complained that the President was too slow," while others had also complained that "he had been too fast, or even rash in his acts." But with a people who were active and impatient, he who provoked no discussion or produced no division of opinion would be more than human. Mr. Hamlin believed that Lincoln had steered the right course, and said: "Amid the perils that have surrounded the ship of state he has guided her with the hand of a skillful pilot, and will soon reach the quiet haven of peace."

Mr. Hamlin next referred to Johnson's nomination, and said the convention which was composed of all parties had deemed it wisest to take for Vice-President a man who had been identified with the Democratic party, and "the honored and incorruptible patriot, Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee," had been nominated. He knew Johnson well, and "a purer patriot" did not live in the land. He was eminently "fit to discharge the duties of President, should he in the providence of God be called to do so." Amidst the traitors in the Senate from his own section "he stood unmoved, true to the Union, and unconditionally loyal to his country."

Mr. Hamlin finally sketched Johnson graphically as one who stood "faithful among the faithless," and who, "separated from home, his

property confiscated, his sons imprisoned, and his wife and children driven to the mountains for the preservation of their lives," had "proved his loyalty and patriotism beyond a doubt."

Mr. Hamlin's eulogies of Lincoln and Johnson seem to have won him a higher regard from his party, judging from the comments evoked. Space can be spared for only one selection, which is taken from a letter written by John W. Forney to Mr. Hamlin, who was supposed to be on intimate terms with President Lincoln. This is interesting, considering the far-fetched story that he and Cameron<sup>1</sup> were parties to a "deep and mysterious conspiracy," plotted by Mr. Lincoln, to nominate Johnson. Forney wrote on June 20, when his recollection of the convention was fresh, and before the public mind was befogged by arbitrary interpretation of Lincoln's words regarding the vice-presidency. Among other things Forney said: "You had a right to look to a renomination. I do not know whether you desired it; certainly you never intimated such a thought to me, but it would have been logically right if it had been freely conferred. Hence the value of your manly words about Andy Johnson. I am very proud of the vote of Pennsylvania in your favor, and when I have the honor to see you I shall give you some items on this point. I was at Baltimore all the time, and helped a little, but saw more. Cameron was your friend after himself, but old Thad (Stevens), who did n't want to be Vice-President, was really for you. New England was not a unit for anybody and was not for you. But what of it? To be Vice-President is clearly not to be anything more than reflected greatness."

Consistent with their record, the Democrats who had directly or indirectly opposed the war nominated General George B. McClellan for President and George H. Pendleton for Vice-President, and in convention declared the war a "failure."<sup>2</sup> But no assemblage of men in the political history of this country were exposed to ridicule more quickly than the deliverers of this treasonable utterance. While they were in session news came of the capture of Fort Morgan, and before they had lost their solemn faces, the tidings of Farragut's victories in Mobile staggered them. But Copperhead humiliation was rendered complete even before the campaign was fairly opened, with Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan, all smashing the Confederacy at Petersburg and Atlanta, and in the Shenandoah Valley. The great President was now master of the military and political situation. Moreover, the soldiers of the Confederacy, who had been deceived

<sup>1</sup> Forney and Cameron were political rivals in Pennsylvania, and Forney's tribute to Cameron's loyalty to Mr. Hamlin is convincing evidence.

<sup>2</sup> It is to the credit of General McClellan that in his letter of acceptance he refuted the treasonable platform of his party.



of trouble for posterity, and which should preserve liberty for all time to come. He described the military situation by saying, "Grant has the rebellion by the throat; gallant Phil Sheridan is pressing it on the rear; Farragut has got it on the front, and Sherman is piercing its heart." He predicted that the people would be true to "that able and honestest of all men, Abraham Lincoln, and to Andrew Johnson, than whom no purer patriot breathed the pure air of freedom."

The magnitude of the Union victory and the Copperhead defeat, which resulted in Lincoln's reelection, cannot be overestimated. Every free State, with the solitary exception of New Jersey, cast its electoral vote for the Union ticket, while of the border States, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia also supported it. Only three States of the twenty-two voting declared the war to be a "failure." Lincoln had 212 votes in the electoral college, and McClellan but 21. No unpatriotic party ever received a more deserved rebuke than the Copperhead organization in this instance. For years the Democratic party was unable to recover its prestige on account of the odium which it justly earned during the war, and it did not regain prestige until new voters came on the scene with better ideas of the principles of Jefferson and Jackson, and sought to give the party a republican status.

There was an incident connected with the election in Maine that is recorded with regret. Mr. Hamlin's friends had confidently supposed that the legislature would return him to the Senate, and they based their expectation on the belief that he was the choice of the people. A vacancy was created in the Senate by the resignation of Mr. Fessenden to become secretary of the treasury, and the legislature chosen in September was called on to elect his successor. It was generally believed that Mr. Fessenden would remain in the Cabinet, and that Mr. Hamlin would thus have a clear field. This was his own opinion, and had he supposed that Mr. Fessenden planned to enter the contest he would have taken the details of his campaign into his own hands. But Mr. Fessenden gave no sign of desiring to return to the Senate, and when there was a call for Mr. Hamlin to speak for the party throughout the doubtful States, he consulted with some who professed to be his friends. One who held a high position at this time said: "You are needed on the stump. There will be no contest against your election to the Senate; but if you do not feel sure I will manage your campaign for you, and keep you closely informed." Mr. Fessenden, however, found his duties as secretary of the treasury irksome, and became a candidate for the Senate while Mr. Hamlin was in the West. The one who had promised to organize Mr. Hamlin's canvass failed him, and thus at the start, when men were arraying themselves in the

contest for senator, and the politicians were laying wires, Mr. Hamlin's manager failed him, and virtually threw the contest into the hands of his opponents. When Mr. Hamlin surveyed the situation he withdrew his name. This incident lent peculiar interest to the senatorial fight of 1869, when Mr. Hamlin was returned to the Senate over Lot M. Morrill.

When Congress convened in December, 1864, Mr. Hamlin returned to Washington, to close his official life at the capital, fully expecting to retire to private life. An incident happened which served to embarrass both Mr. Lincoln and himself, although it is now of interest in showing the President's friendship for Mr. Hamlin. A movement was started in Maine to have him appointed secretary of the treasury. He wrote his wife on February 23: "I deeply regret to see that the members of our legislature have seen fit to recommend me for a place in the Cabinet. I requested them not to do it, and I am very sorry they have done so. Nothing will come of it, and it will only place me in a false attitude of seeking a place, which is not the case, for I do not want such a place." On February 26 he again alluded to the subject: "I suppose my true friends thought that they were doing me a service when they passed the resolution you refer to. But . . . I regret that they said a word. I feel deeply anxious as to what I am to do and how we are to get along. I see no way but for me to go to work on my land and get all I can out of it. . . . I would not ask a favor of the administration. . . . But I will not trouble you about these matters, but will invoke you to be of good cheer."

Mr. Hamlin's friends, however, insisted on presenting his name to the President, and Mr. Lincoln offered Mr. Hamlin the Treasury portfolio. This was unexpected, and all the more gratifying on that account. Mr. Hamlin gave a very brief account of the incident, and it cannot be said what his own disposition was; however, it is reasonable to conclude that he would have accepted the offer had not certain contingencies arisen. He was one of the most considerate of men in speaking of those with whom he did not sustain cordial relations, and never gave his grievances to the public. While Thurlow Weed and a few others got hold of a little gossip connecting Mr. Hamlin with the Treasury Department and the French mission, the facts were known only to Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin. They may be disclosed now simply as an episode that arose between two distinguished men who were brought in collision to some extent by the force of circumstances. Mr. Lincoln contemplated reorganizing his Cabinet, and for this and other reasons he desired to have Mr. Hamlin remain at Washington in his councils. It is not probable that Mr. Seward would have remained at the head of the State Department, and Mr. Hamlin's entrance in the Cabinet would have rendered Mr. Welles's retirement



necessary. But Mr. Fessenden objected to Mr. Hamlin's appointment, and further speculation is rendered futile by Mr. Lincoln's death. All Mr. Hamlin said to his son Charles was that President Lincoln called him one day to the White House, and in sorrow informed him that Mr. Fessenden had threatened war if he should appoint Mr. Hamlin to the Cabinet. Mr. Lincoln showed a good deal of feeling, and said, perhaps thinking of the Baltimore convention, "You have not been treated right. It is too bad, too bad. But what can I do? I am tied hands and feet." As Mr. Hamlin had not originally desired a seat in the Cabinet, he allowed the affair to drop. The newspaper gossips of the day published far and wide Mr. Hamlin's earnest and sincere expression of friendship for Mr. Lincoln on his departure from Washington, as evidence of his satisfaction in the President's attitude toward him.

An account of the personal and official relations between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Hamlin, however brief, would not be complete without a few facts about the special favor the President showed Mr. Hamlin in dealing with the practical politics involved. Mr. Hamlin necessarily felt delicate in presenting claims to Mr. Lincoln on behalf of his friends since his own office commanded no power. In his account to his son, General Charles Hamlin, he said: "I asked Lincoln for only a very few government offices, and he never refused me a single personal favor." Excluding military positions, the whole number of federal offices Mr. Hamlin asked of President Lincoln was in half a dozen. Perhaps the most important was that of naval officer at Washington, which was filled by Samuel P. Brown, of Orland, Maine, whose long tenure of office and conceded administrative ability amply warranted Mr. Hamlin's choice. Another appointment was that of Shepherd Pike, who was an associate of Horace Greeley, and whose selection as minister to the Hague was partially due to the Vice-President's desires. A third case was of peculiar interest to Mr. Lincoln himself. The entire congressional delegation from Maine had united on a man of their own choice for collector of internal revenue in a certain district. John West, of Franklin, was also a candidate. All Mr. Hamlin did was to inform the President that Mr. West was one of the first influential politicians in Maine to help him inaugurate the Lincoln movement in their State, which took a substantial vote away from Seward. Mr. Lincoln smiled, and by way of reply at once nominated Mr. West, to the great amazement of Senators Fessenden and Morrill. They were utterly dumfounded, in fact, until they happened to look up at the Vice-President and saw a twinkle in his eye. Mr. Hamlin's choice of men for officers in the army has been already detailed. The record of the men he supported speaks for itself. He was disappointed in only a few instances.



Mr. Hamlin relinquished the vice-presidency on the 4th of March, 1865, when a most distressing incident happened which clearly explained President Lincoln's repugnance for Andrew Johnson, and his exclamation of disgust when informed of his nomination for Vice-President. When Johnson came to Washington to be inaugurated, he was accompanied by enthusiastic friends and admirers from Tennessee. There was a great deal of drinking and jubilation among them, and Johnson was already on the verge of another spree when the day came for him to be inducted into office. He called at the senate chamber shortly before the hour of inaugural, and found Vice-President Hamlin and General Charles Hamlin waiting for him in the former's private room. There was a cordial conversation, and then Johnson said, "Mr. Hamlin, I am not well, and need a stimulant. Have you any whiskey?" "No," replied Mr. Hamlin, "when I became Vice-President, I gave an order prohibiting the sale of liquor in the senate restaurant; but if you desire, I will send across the street for some whiskey." Mr. Johnson expressed his wish for liquor, and a messenger procured him a bottle. He filled a table glass up to the brim, and drank it down without any water. He then resumed conversation, and began to tell Mr. Hamlin of his ambition to make the effort of his life when taking the oath of office. While talking on this theme, he poured out another glass full to the brim, and rapidly poured that down. Mr. Hamlin afterwards said to his son that this made him a little apprehensive, but knowing that Johnson was a hard drinker, he supposed that he could stand the liquor he had taken. There was up to this time, indeed, nothing to indicate that the whiskey had affected Johnson.

A moment later, word was given that it was time for the inaugural procession to start. Vice-President Hamlin offered Mr. Johnson his arm, and they started to leave the room, with General Hamlin following them. They had hardly stepped out of the room when Johnson, excusing himself hurriedly, turned back, almost running into General Hamlin. The general naturally turned around to see what the matter was, and saw Johnson step up to the table where the whiskey was and pour down a third tumblerful. He then hurried back to the senate chamber and took his seat on the dais next to Mr. Hamlin, who now delivered his valedictory address, which was a brief and appropriate review of his relations with the Senate as its presiding officer, and an acknowledgment of the kindness shown him, and also his thanks for its vote of commendation for his services in the chair. While Mr. Hamlin was speaking, as it was afterwards learned, the heat of the senate chamber affected Johnson, and when Mr. Hamlin called on him to take the oath of office, he had become so drunk that he made a miserable spectacle of himself. Before

those around him had realized what the matter was, Johnson was making an incoherent, drunken, maudlin harangue. He ejaculated disconnected sentences: "Your President is a plebeian — I am a plebeian — glory in it — Tennessee has never gone out of the Union — I am going to talk two and a half minutes on that point, and want you to hear me — Tennessee was always loyal." We all derive our power from the people. I want you to hear me two and a half minutes on that point."<sup>1</sup>

When Johnson began his speech, his condition was not noticeable, and his stammering was attributed to his natural feelings. He was a very excitable man, and in the heat of debate or speechmaking would often be carried away by the excess of his feelings. But as Mr. Hamlin listened, he came to the conclusion that the man was under the influence of liquor. Leaning forward quietly, to attract as little attention as possible, Mr. Hamlin took hold of Johnson's coat, pulled it gently, and whispered, "Johnson, stop!" But this had no effect; Johnson was thoroughly excited, and wound up for a speech. He blundered on, and possessed of the idea that he must explain his political principles, turned to men on the dais. "Mr. Secretary of War," he said to Mr. Stanton, "you derive your power from the people." Then pausing, he asked, "Who is the Secretary of the Navy?" some one replied, "Mr. Welles," and Johnson addressed him in a similar strain. By this time the spectators had comprehended the meaning of Johnson's behavior. President Lincoln, who had entered the senate chamber, grasped the situation, and a look came over his face none forgot who saw it. Charles Sumner covered his face with his hands, and bowed his head down on his desk. Other senators likewise buried their faces in their hands, or in other ways revealed their disgust. The entrance of the presidential party created a diversion, and taking advantage of it, Mr. Hamlin and others managed to choke Johnson off long enough to enable the Vice-President to announce that he would administer the oath of office to his successor. Mr. Hamlin read the oath by sentences, Johnson following him, stumbling and repeating himself. After the inaugural was over, Johnson attempted to speak again, but Mr. Hamlin and another man walked him around for a while, and finally turned him over to Preston King, who took him in charge. The regrettable truth is, Johnson continued in his spree for another week.

While Mr. Hamlin was resting at home, the Union armies were steadily overpowering the Confederacy, and in April the glad tidings were flashed over the North that Lee had laid down his arms at Appomattox. In the jubilations which followed at Bangor, Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Herald*, March 5, 1865. The real speech was not recorded in the *Congressional Globe*.



Hamlin made several short addresses, and his utterances were of heartfelt thanksgiving. But a few days later joy was turned into gloom when the news came that the good President had been murdered by a fanatic. Mr. Hamlin was walking down street early on the morning of April 15, when the fearful intelligence had reached Bangor. A crowd of sorrowful men were standing before a newspaper bulletin board, and as Mr. Hamlin approached, they surrounded him. The tears were streaming down his cheeks, and his voice choked when he tried to speak. All he could say was, "He was a good man; he was a great man." Mr. Hamlin stood for a moment, reading the bulletin board, and after he had somewhat regained his composure, some one respectfully inquired what kind of a President Mr. Johnson would make. H. C. Quimby, a well-known citizen of Bangor, who was present, said Mr. Hamlin promptly replied in his sincere way: "I think that he will make a good President, and that the country will be safe in his hands." Mr. Quimby added that Mr. Hamlin's sincerity impressed all present with a larger sense of his generosity, since there was but a common feeling that Mr. Hamlin ought to have been in the White House at that moment.

When a public meeting was held in Bangor a few days later, to take action on the death of President Lincoln, Mr. Hamlin was present, but when called on to speak, could not trust his feelings. He attended the funeral at Washington, but did not accompany the mourners to Illinois. His family well remembered that his attitude was that of a man who had lost his best friend. While he did not say much, in accordance with his nature, Lincoln's name was never mentioned in his presence without evoking a few words of an affectionate, almost reverential nature. His manner told the story of his sense of personal loss. He mourned the man, and no one ever heard him intimate a regret over the changed condition of circumstances which found him in private life and another where his friends thought he should have been. The only public function he fulfilled at this time was to deliver the Fourth of July oration. His chief duties were to take care of his little farm. This kind of life was a solace to him, and out of the shadow of Lincoln's assassination he seemed to be happy. He fell naturally into the life of a country squire, and repeated his oldtime saying, that when he entered politics he "spoiled the making of a good farmer."

The most important incident with which Mr. Hamlin concerned himself during this brief interval of retirement was the movement to establish a state college of agriculture and mechanical arts along the lines he had advocated when he became governor of Maine, and on which Justin S. Morrill subsequently framed his land grant bill. This project did not at first meet with much favor in Maine. There



was an objection on the ground of expense, the farmers doubted whether the institution could make good agriculturalists out of their sons, and the other colleges were generally thought to be sufficient. Mr. Hamlin took the fair position. He was a friend of the classical college, and for many years was a trustee of Colby. He believed that a classical course was of advantage to those, at least, who intended to enter the so-called learned professions; he also sent two sons to Colby and one to Bowdoin, who became lawyers; but as all students did not wish to become lawyers, doctors, ministers, or teachers, he did not believe that all students required a knowledge of Latin and Greek. While he believed that the classical college filled a useful field, he also thought that there was room for another college which would enter more closely into the life of the multitude. He recognized the value of a classical education, but he was nevertheless of the opinion that one could acquire a larger acquaintance with the practical and ideal sides of life and better mental discipline from a thorough study of his own tongue than of a dead tongue;<sup>1</sup> still, he never took part in this time-worn controversy, but sought to aid the various institutions he supported in their respective spheres of usefulness.

When Mr. Hamlin lent his aid to the state college plan, there was a lively controversy over the site to be chosen. The friends of Bowdoin and Colby each wished to attach the new institution to their respective colleges. Mr. Hamlin was convinced that it ought to have an independent site and separate existence. He favored Orono as the location, and when he was elected president of the board of trustees bent his energies to these ends. The decisive meeting was held at Augusta, when it appeared that the result would be a tie. He learned that a trustee who did not intend to be present favored Orono. He called on this trustee, and when the vote was taken Orono was chosen. Mr. Hamlin did not continue an official connection with the Maine State College after this, but he maintained a strong interest in it. He saw it grow from a feeble affair of a dozen students into a populous and useful institution, developing on the same lines as Cornell and other universities, which are typical products of American life and fill a great field.

This life was not to continue, however; Charles Sumner was conscience-stricken, and desired to atone so far as he could for the wrong he had done Mr. Hamlin. Of his own accord he initiated a movement to make Mr. Hamlin collector of the port of Boston, on the

<sup>1</sup> Harvard University began about this time under President Eliot's administration to extend the elective system, and preference is now given to the English language as the basis of the academic course at Cambridge, rather than to Latin and Greek.

ground that his long services and inadequate compensation demanded his appointment to this lucrative position. The collectorship of Boston was then worth from \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year. The salary was \$10,000, and the fees, commissions, and perquisites allowed on seizures and other things incidental to the custom service sometimes doubled or even trebled the salary. Mr. Hamlin had no knowledge of Sumner's action, and at this time did not know the peculiar reasons for Sumner's opposition to his renomination for Vice-President. He may have known in a general way that Sumner favored Dickinson, but naturally supposed that it was on grounds of policy. His relations with Sumner were therefore friendly at this time, or otherwise he would never have placed himself under obligations to him. But the main consideration with Mr. Hamlin now was to provide for the future. He had a family of young children to bring up, and there were other calls on him. The collectorship thus unexpectedly offered to him solved the problem. The following letter, which Sumner wrote Mr. Hamlin on August 22, 1865, gives all the necessary details:—

MY DEAR HAMLIN,—It seemed to Wilson and myself that before deciding on your course you ought to know the history of the recent change at our custom-house, and we hoped for an opportunity of speaking of it freely in a personal interview. As you may not be here very soon, I will give the narrative.

Some time ago Mr. Hooper [Congressman Samuel Hooper, of Boston] received a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, stating that the administration desired to change the three officers at the custom-house whose salaries were large, and he asked him to confer with the two senators and Mr. Rice, and send him the names which we should agree upon for the places. We concluded to confine the conference to those indicated, and I invited the whole delegation to meet at my house for this purpose.

At the meeting of the delegation I stated that, on general grounds, I was against a change—that I doubted its policy, but that I should coöperate cheerfully with the delegation in making the desired recommendations. I then proceeded to propose Mr. Hamlin for collector. It was evident at once that there was a strong disposition in all the delegation towards Mr. Hamlin; but it was remarked that the naval office was easier in its duties, and with absolutely the same emoluments as the collectorship; that the naval officer might be absent for weeks without any inconvenience at the office, while the collector ought to be at his office continually; and, further, that the collectorship was to a certain extent a political office, affecting our local Massachusetts politics, and, therefore, most properly filled by a Massachusetts citizen. These topics were discussed at length, when the

delegation overruled my proposition and recommended Mr. Lord for collector and Mr. Hamlin for naval officer. Mr. Hooper and myself were appointed a committee to communicate this result to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Some days later Mr. Hooper received a letter from the secretary stating that the President wished to offer Mr. Hamlin the alternative of these two offices. This is all we know. I am not informed with regard to your personal desires. . . . Of course, whatever conclusion you may adopt you may count on the cordial support of the delegation, and especially of myself. Let me add that Governor Andrew was very warmly in favor of your nomination.

Ever sincerely yours,

CHARLES SUMNER.

Mr. Hamlin decided to accept the collectorship. He had ample precedent as well as sufficient reasons. James Monroe, fifth President of the United States, was postmaster of New York city after he retired from the White House, and John Quincy Adams, sixth President, returned to the House of Representatives after having sat in the Senate, the Cabinet, and the executive chair. Mr. Hamlin entered on his new duties in August, 1865, looking forward to four years of pleasant and profitable occupation. He was agreeably associated with D. W. Gooch, the naval officer, whom he had well known in Congress, and General A. B. Underwood, the surveyor of the port, a distinguished officer of the civil war, and he had a superior staff attached to his own office. But circumstances dispelled the outlook, and in a year Mr. Hamlin voluntarily resigned his office, the reasons for which form an important narrative by themselves.

When Mr. Hamlin entered public life it was the custom for the newly installed administration to eject those from office who held opposing political opinions, and while this had a certain educational value in the formative period of the republic, it was now becoming a source of national weakness. It is important, therefore, to observe Mr. Hamlin's course on entering the office which commanded the greatest patronage in New England. When he was hounded down by the pro-slavery machine, it was right and natural that when he won he should place his friends on guard. He applied the Jeffersonian test, and he would ask of an applicant for office, "Is he honest, is he competent, is he a Democrat?" While a chapter might be written to show that Mr. Hamlin was faithful to those who were faithful to him, and indulged in no hypocrisy about office patronage, the fact to be developed now is his opposition to the system of wholesale ejection from office, and also his earnest desire to conduct his office on strict business principles, to the exclusion of the professional spoils-men. He had the same sense of obligation to the government as



that which compelled him to resign the chairmanship of the Committee on Commerce. He would not let the Boston custom-house be looted by the office-seekers of his party at the expense of the government, though he fairly consulted his party's welfare.

This is shown in the following letter he voluntarily wrote Secretary McCulloch : —

(Unofficial.)

BOSTON, October 11, 1865.

HON. H. McCULLOCH, Secretary of the Treasury :

*My dear Sir,* — In administering the office of collector of this port, it would harmonize with my wishes if there were no officer who should be removed and if there were no appointments to be made. But on such examination as I have made, I cannot resist the conclusion that there are some inefficient men, and that by appointing others in their places more promptness and efficiency would be added to the service. I should judge that somewhere between ten and twenty such cases might be found.

There is a great pressure for the appointment of men who have been in the service and are amply competent. I have made some six appointments, and all from that class of men. Many cases have great merit and appeal strongly to my sympathy. My purpose is to learn how far my judgment in these matters is to be allowed and will meet with your approval. I believe my deputies are all good officers ; but one will be changed, as I have advised you. In all other cases I would not suggest or recommend a change, except where I should believe there would be an improvement in the office, or for other substantial reasons.

Responsible as I must be for the faithfulness, promptness, and efficiency of the business of my office, I have presumed that my judgment in these matters would control. But I desire to know just how it is, for I shall not allow myself to be dragged into petty controversies in these matters.

Please let me hear from you, and oblige yours truly,

H. HAMLIN.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### RE-ELECTED TO THE SENATE.

THE quarrel between Andrew Johnson and the party that made him President was in a large measure due to his disposition. He was a curious combination of the patriot and the demagogue, and in him the qualities of independence, honesty, courage, and ability were more than counterbalanced by obstinacy, conceit, coarseness, and pugnacity. Unfortunately the latter qualities dominated him in the presidency, and he was destroyed. "He seized the golden fruit, and in a moment of inconceivable madness threw it away." Circumstances were of course contributory, but had he listened to the right men and fulfilled his pledges, he might at least have left a personal reputation of credit and honor. But he could not control his temper, and his obstinacy and conceit governed him, when a reasonable man would have given ear to the dictates of prudence and duty. His quarrelsome and resentful nature brought him into trouble at the outset of his presidential career. He did nothing to redeem himself after his disgraceful conduct when he was inaugurated Vice-President; on the contrary, he continued his spree. After he was conducted from the senate chamber in his disgraceful condition, the Republican senators held a conference, at which Sumner offered a resolution calling on Johnson to resign his office. No action was taken, yet the moral effect caused numerous newspapers, the legislature of Wisconsin, and other representative bodies to demand Johnson's resignation. This incensed him, and he nourished these reflections on him as he would a grudge. This was inevitable in a man of his character. When he entered the presidency he had an opportunity to punish his critics and enemies. Thus at the outset of his administration he was sore against the leaders of his party.

In the beginning of his presidential career Johnson was on fire with desires for vengeance. He proclaimed his intention to "make treason odious," and appalled even Ben Wade with his threats of hanging traitors. He had a policy already framed, and announced this before the ground had closed over Lincoln's grave, and he talked so much in public, and praised himself so much by name, that he created further distrust. Within a few days after his induction into the presidency, Zachariah Chandler, who had rather liked than distrusted him, said to

his friends, "Johnson has the nightmare and needs watching." But if Johnson's conduct evoked adverse comments and strictures from his party leaders, it exposed his weakness to those who were quick enough to take advantage of it. Smarting under the rebukes he had received, Johnson sought balm, and those who applied it were the very men who had once ostracized and spurned him as their social inferior. Their flattery was agreeable, and the President was in a mood to listen to the plan of reconstruction which had suggested itself to the kindly but visionary Seward.

This plan was based on the assumption that the Southern States which had been in the revolt had never been out of the Union, and that the granting of wholesale pardon would convert the insurrectionists into loyal citizens. This was wrong to the North and South alike. It inflamed the former and deceived the latter. It was not in human nature for those who had conquered in a great war to see the results endangered by a headstrong egotist without protest, nor for those who were conquered to accept their reverses without sulking. The North was sickened of strife, and desired to have the country reunited as soon as possible, and measures adopted which would safeguard the results of the war and prevent another attempt at secession. The South desired to make the best of conditions offered, and it was natural that irritated and exasperated leaders should have grasped at the Seward-Johnson plan when it promised them restoration to citizenship and even power under the government which they had sought to destroy, without a single precaution being taken to render their allegiance secure. But more inconceivable was the folly of ignoring the millions of freedmen, or of leaving them and the Southern Union men unprotected to the mercy of a smarting and sullen foe. The enactment of cruel and abominable laws which virtually reënslaved the negro, the persecution of Union people, and the absorption of power by unrepentant rebels were the necessary consequences of this terrible blunder by Johnson and Seward.

Johnson proceeded in his plan of reconstruction without consulting Congress. This was a gross usurpation of power, and soon he got the government into the mud. The Republicans repudiated him, and when Congress assembled in December, 1866, the struggle was violent. The North plainly saw that Johnson had gone over to the South, and was trying to rehabilitate the Southern secessionists in power. The Republican party in Congress was almost a solid phalanx against the man its every member had voted for only a year before. His vanity offended, Johnson was now an enemy even to the plain Christian duties of the hour, — the protection of the freedmen and the Union refugee, the annulment of the tyrannous laws which made emancipation a mockery, and the enactment of measures to give the



negro his status as a citizen. He vetoed bills to these ends, and they were passed over his head. He flung all restraint to the winds, and addressed howling mobs in the language of vulgar stump speech-makers. He was trying to build up a party, and, to quote Lowell, was the first of the Presidents "who descended to the stump and spoke to the people as if they were a mob."

But this record is not required to proceed further with Johnson, since the point of separation between the President and his party was the objective to be reached. When this time came in the summer of 1866, Mr. Hamlin considered it time for him to act. His own feelings may be more easily imagined than described. He was at first amazed at Johnson's behavior, and then mortified and alarmed. He desired reconciliation between the North and the South as speedily as possible, and on terms which would render it impossible for mischief-makers to cause further trouble. He believed that it was the solemn duty of the government to protect the freedman and the Southern loyalist. He did not forgive the handful of conspirators who did all within their power to lead their people into a fearful war, but at the same time he harbored no feelings of resentment against those whom rash leaders had wantonly deceived. He took the same view Lincoln is supposed to have held, and that was, the arch conspirators were responsible for their acts, while the masses of the Southern people were revolutionists. He had only kindly feelings for them. But it was incredible to him that a President, who had affiliated with the Union party, could think of betraying the government into the hands of men who still boasted that they were unrepentant rebels, and who had met the magnanimity of the North with boasts of their feelings, the shameless abuse of power, and the persecution of helpless freedmen and loyalists. The utter abandonment of the negro, even in the face of the merciless proscription to which he was subjected, was the last drop in Mr. Hamlin's cup of sorrow. He could not continue in office under such a President, and resolved to resign the collectorship, though it would cost him the fortune he had hoped to accumulate.

The few friends with whom Mr. Hamlin consulted confidentially on this point appear to have taken the ground that he could remain in office without stultifying himself. They argued that the government must go on, and that good men were particularly necessary in this important emergency. They thought, therefore, that if a duty was actually devolved on Mr. Hamlin it was to remain at his post. As a matter of fact many men of character did retain their positions under Johnson while refraining from public opposition to him, and Mr. Hamlin did not question their right to do so; but his sense of delicacy forbade him from holding the collectorship, and "his steady

reply to earnest friends who presented this course was that he was an old-fashioned man in his conception of public duty." <sup>1</sup> He decided to resign long before he actually relinquished his office. He awaited an opportune time, and that came when Johnson began to build up his party in hopes of securing popular approval in the fall elections of 1866. Mercenary office-holders were enlisted in this service, and claptrap conventions were held under the auspices of effusive Union and Confederate soldiers. It is only just to Johnson and his Cabinet to say that no intimation was made to Mr. Hamlin that his support was expected. They had at least sense enough to know that they had better leave him alone, but his letter of resignation was probably a bitter surprise to Johnson. It was as follows:—

August 28, 1866.

TO THE PRESIDENT, — One year ago you tendered to me, unsolicited on my part, the position of collector of customs for the district of Boston and Charlestown. I entered upon the duties of the office, and have endeavored faithfully to discharge the same, and I trust in a manner satisfactory to the public interested therein.

I do not fail to observe the movements and efforts which have been made, and are now being made, to organize a party in the country, consisting almost exclusively of those who actively engaged in the late rebellion and their allies who sought by other means to cripple and embarrass the government. These classes of persons, with a small fraction of others, constitute the organization. It proposes to defeat and overthrow the Union Republican party, and to restore to power, without sufficient guarantees for the future and protection to men who have been loyal, those who sought to destroy the government.

I gave all the influence I possessed to create and uphold the Union Republican party during the war, and without the aid of which our government would have been destroyed and the rebellion a success. With such a party as has been inaugurated, and for such purposes, I have no sympathy, nor can I acquiesce in its measures by my silence. I therefore tender to you my resignation of the office of the collector of customs for the district of Boston and Charlestown, to take effect from the time when a successor shall be appointed and qualified.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) H. HAMLIN.

Mr. Hamlin's resignation was one of the leading themes of the day, and the Republican orators used his repudiation of Johnson as an argument. The fact did not escape them that Mr. Hamlin voluntarily relinquished from seventy-five to one hundred thousand dollars in the

<sup>1</sup> Blaine's *Twenty Years of Congress*, vol. ii. p. 242.

vindication of his principles at a time when he was virtually beginning life over again. A few comments selected from many show how his act was regarded. The "Boston Transcript" said in part, on September 3, "The noble and manly letter of Hon. Hannibal Hamlin, resigning the office of collector of this port, we print elsewhere. . . . While our mercantile community will regret to lose the services of so excellent and popular an officer, the feeling will be almost universal that on account of Mr. Hamlin's peculiar relations to President Lincoln's administration, and the present condition of affairs, he could not, as a high-minded citizen, take any other course. Mr. Hamlin will have the best wishes of loyal millions for his continued health and prosperity. Wherever he goes throughout the country, he will be received with the cordiality and enthusiasm which his decided, consistent, and patriotic conduct deserves." The "Boston Journal" said, among other things, that the circumstance of his resignation "renders his act worthy of his political antecedents, and is a convincing proof that official patronage cannot silence the honest dictates of one whose high position in the past peculiarly qualifies him to judge of the great political issues which are now pending. . . . The resignation of Mr. Hamlin will be regretted by the merchants of Boston."

Some personal comments are of interest also. One is as follows :—

I have just read your magnanimous and high-toned letter of resignation. I cannot resist the impulse to express my gratitude and admiration. It is not only refreshing, but in the highest degree encouraging, to find in these evil days some patriotic and unselfish men left. Heaven grant there may be enough to save the nation.

With profound respects, yours,

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

Another comment of peculiar interest was that of General Harris M. Plaisted, afterwards governor of Maine, who at the end of Mr. Hamlin's life, and differing from him in politics, asserted it his sincere belief that Mr. Hamlin's resignation of the collectorship of the port of Boston was the most honorable and important act of his life. General Plaisted was a Republican at that time, and always believed that Mr. Hamlin's repudiation of Johnson was largely instrumental in preventing the President from building up a party of office-holders, and helped start the wave of defeat that completely submerged Johnson in the ensuing election.

Mr. Hamlin's letter of resignation was not made public until a few days after it was received, owing to the absence of the President from Washington. When it was accepted, Mr. Hamlin returned to Maine, free to speak out his mind. At this time public opinion had not suffi-



ciently advanced to demand the impeachment of Johnson, and it was for this purpose Mr. Hamlin came before his townsmen on September 8. This was the hardest position in which he was ever placed. The disclosure of his views would be the signal for an attack on him, and envy and jealousy would be attributed to him by those who could not or would not understand him, and the opinions he expressed were found to be interpreted as a guide to the course which he would have pursued had he been President instead of Johnson. Yet those who knew him understood that he always meant what he said, and they were convinced that he was one of the few unique men in the history of this country who narrowly missed the presidency and yet did not desire it. The sincere readers of history will therefore view this speech as Mr. Hamlin's belief as to what should have been done by an honest President, rather than what he himself would have done had he been President.

The ideas Mr. Hamlin entertained as to the policy which should be pursued were along the lines already indicated. He thought that government in the South should be restored on the basis of the immutable principles of liberty, equality, and justice, and he did not think that the President should accept any terms which did not provide for the protection of the loyal Southrons. Vengeance had no place in his heart, but he frankly and sternly demanded that justice be done to the leaders. He warned the people against bitterness, and speaking of the Tories of the Revolution who were exiled, he said that he did not want to see the same course pursued with regard to the Southern rebels. He was willing to have them remain in the country, provided they behaved themselves, but, so help him God, had he the power he would hang half a dozen of the leading rebels who got up the rebellion and murdered three hundred thousand loyal soldiers. A few capital examples would have been a more efficacious panacea for quiet and security in the present and future than any Copperhead nostrums. It would go somewhere towards making treason odious. For these rebels to go unwhipped of justice would be but an invitation at some future time for another set of Catilines to raise the torch of rebellion.

Mr. Hamlin next proceeded to demand the impeachment of President Johnson, charging him with usurping powers not delegated to him. In support of this he simply cited the Constitution in defining the functions of Congress, the executive, and the judiciary. Congress had the sole power to make laws, and the President was its instrument, the servant of Congress, not the master, as Johnson professed to be. Where did the President obtain the authority to appoint provisional governors in the Southern States, and to create conditions whereby they should return to the Union? Had the President submitted his acts to Congress, Mr. Hamlin would have had no com-

plaint ; but instead of doing this, the President assumed to make the conditions, declared the work of Congress an interference, and denied its rights. If this usurpation was not a high crime within the meaning of the Constitution, it certainly came to a misdemeanor. In addition to this, he charged the President with the moral responsibility for the New Orleans massacre, with the attempt to build up a party composed of rebels, Copperheads, and those who could be purchased at the auction of the offices. He urged the country to stand by Congress and the constitutional amendments. Impartial suffrage without distinction of race or color would have been the North's wish, but if the States would not accept, the class excluded should not be counted in the basis of congressional representation. "Did we fight down the rebellion to give the South more power?" was the last question Mr. Hamlin asked, and the country pondered it many a year following the madness and folly of Andrew Johnson.

While it might not be safe to pursue this speculative question far, yet certain facts ought to be presented on account of their suggestive nature. During the civil war President Lincoln undoubtedly considered the future of the South when the conflict should have ceased. He had some conversation with Mr. Hamlin on this subject, but it was probably of a purely tentative nature, since the latter made no mention of it to his family. It is a matter of public record, however, that after the United States troops gained a footing in Florida, there was an earnest proposition to appoint Eli Thayer military governor, and to bring Northern immigrants into the State. This was discussed in Congress, and a delegation was chosen, with Vice-President Hamlin as spokesman, to urge this plan on President Lincoln. The newspaper reports said that Mr. Hamlin warmly recommended this step, and that the delegation withdrew encouraged at their reception. In private conversation Mr. Hamlin asserted that immigration southward should have been encouraged at the close of the war, and land provided to the thrifty negro. It is of interest to add that his neighbor, Chief Justice Appleton, was corresponding at this time with John Stuart Mill, who expressed the same ideas, and also dwelt on the necessity of educating the colored man.

Mr. Hamlin spoke in Philadelphia and other large cities, and presented the same argument. The "Philadelphia Press" said that the Academy of Music was crowded with people who came to hear him, and that he was received with tumultuous cheering. The proposition to impeach Johnson was received with approbation, and this was the popular feeling when the time came for Congress to act. Johnson's dishonest proposition for the government to repudiate its debt was perhaps the most infamous that ever came from a President. It was enough to convince the sober-minded that the man was inherently

dishonest and unfit for his high office. Unfortunately, the managers of his trial blundered. They impeached him for one thing and tried him for another. They narrowed their accusations down to certain charges about which there could be an honest difference of opinion, whereas they should have confined their indictment to the broad, general facts of his usurpation of power, about which there could be no difference of opinion among honest and competent men. Half a dozen Republican senators were convinced that the articles of impeachment did not properly bring the case within the grounds for constitutional action. Johnson suffered the humiliation of escaping conviction by one vote, and was saved from removal by a technicality. The Democratic senators who opposed the amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery could not be expected to desert a pro-slavery Democrat who was serving their party as President. The moral of the Johnson administration was that Republican institutions of government could survive a civil war and a demagogue usurper in the presidency.

The disappointment consequent on the failure of Congress to convict Johnson was very great, and it seemed to secure Mr. Hamlin a peculiar hold upon the affections of his party. He was often introduced to an audience, to his privately expressed annoyance, as one who should have been President, and some of his friends addressed him as "Mr. President." One who assuaged his own grief in this way was Richard Busteed, a brilliant lawyer, who was once corporation counsel of New York city and afterwards United States district judge in Alabama, who felt as many a Democrat did after 1876 towards Samuel J. Tilden. But, in truth, Mr. Hamlin did not like this. No one is known to have asked him the delicate question what his course as President would have been. His eulogists and the historians of the Republican party asserted that his devotion to principle and belief in his party guaranteed at least an harmonious coöperation between the executive and Congress, while his sense of justice, tempered with his kindness of heart, would have granted the leaders of the rebellion a fair trial, and caused the reconstruction of the South on a plan of statesmanship in accordance with the dictates of the justice-loving and magnanimous people whom he had partially represented during the strife. The personal equation is the guiding factor in determining the statesman's worth.

There is an incident to be related which will throw a little light on Mr. Hamlin's standing with the leaders of his party as a statesman at a time when personal feelings were necessarily in abeyance, and thoughts were on the worth of the man. John W. Babson, Mr. Hamlin's private secretary, wrote him on February 21, 1866, when the struggle between Johnson and Congress was becoming intense, a



letter containing the following extract: "What a cause for anxiety to look down through the three coming years! It is written on every face. Thinking men look weary. Senators and members are worn, restless, and anxious, but determined. Andrew Johnson is spoken often, but Hannibal Hamlin is thought. Selfish, envious tricksters can now contemplate what is and what might have been. You stand in a peculiar position to the people of this country; it must be a source of gratification to you, this turning of all eyes to you. I met Pickard in the rotunda last night. He says Mr. Fessenden came into the committee room last night, and said: 'Oh, if Mr. Hamlin had been renominated at Baltimore, we should have been spared this, and had a man for President.'" This was naturally all the more gratifying considering the personal relations between the two men. Subsequently Mr. Hamlin was called on to testify as to his belief in the honor of Mr. Fessenden. This happened just after the latter had voted to acquit Johnson, when he and his Republican colleagues were censured for their act. Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Fessenden met. Mr. Hamlin offered his hand, and said:—

"Mr. Fessenden, I must say frankly that while I regret your vote, I know that you were influenced only by the sincerest and purest of motives."

Mr. Fessenden's eyes filled, and he said, "Thank you."

The only reference Mr. Hamlin is known to have made to himself in connection with the presidency was in his reply to Mr. Babson's letter on February 26. He said in part:—

"We have sad times truly. How many hearts have been smitten in our community, and how many of rebels and their sympathizers made glad! I look at the events of the past few days in utter amazement, and with such a sorrow as I have never felt at any political movements in my life. I cannot realize the state of things actually existing, and have therefore no heart to comment. But let every man be *true* to the right—let every true man retain his manhood. Come what will, I shall endeavor to do that. I will not degrade myself in my own estimation. I will not deny that it is gratifying to me to know that there is a general belief held by our true men, that had a power that I neither sought nor desired fallen upon me, I would not have deserted the men who had conferred that power upon me. Well, friend Babson, you may be sure I would *not* have betrayed the trust. God helping me, I would have done my whole duty, as I will now in my humble way. I will write you frankly and you may regard it as confidential."

But Mr. Hamlin was not a man to waste time in vain regrets, neither did he know how to be idle. When he relinquished the collectorship of Boston in October, 1866, his plans were already laid for

the building of a railroad in Maine and also for returning to the Senate at the expiration of Mr. Morrill's term in March, 1869. He believed in the future of Maine as a manufacturing State and summer resort. Maine at this time was not well provided with branch roads, and Moosehead Lake and other resorts were accessible only by stage or boat. Mr. Hamlin thought that a road should be built to Moosehead Lake to encourage summer travel, and also to develop that locality. There were, for instance, large deposits of the best slate in Monson and Blanchard, which have been opened up since the railroad was projected by Mr. Hamlin. But at first he contemplated the route from Old Town to Dover as an offshoot of the European and North American Railway, which had been previously constructed from Bangor to St. John, New Brunswick. Mr. Hamlin was elected president of the new company, and was associated with Isaiah Stetson and Franklin Muzzey, of Bangor, and A. M. Robinson, of Dover, in completing it. The road was carried to Dover under Mr. Hamlin's presidency, and subsequently to Moosehead Lake.

This work occupied a part of Mr. Hamlin's time for two years, though it need hardly be said that his mind was more busily occupied with his political campaign. This was indeed a problem, and well calculated to discourage any man but a born fighter. This campaign was regarded as Mr. Hamlin's most brilliant political victory, and for years the senatorial contest of 1869 was spoken of as unique among the many interesting and picturesque political battles of its day. Probably Maine was never under such a tension of feelings for an equal extent of time, and no struggle for the Senate in Maine ever enlisted in that period as many able men. For certain reasons, too, the contest excited national attention, and it was thought by some that perhaps it was without parallel in the annals of American politics. The issue depended on one vote, and Mr. Hamlin worked against the greatest odds and against an able and popular senator. For these reasons the story of this famous campaign may be related. In the lapse of time it now appears as a brilliant contest on both sides, with the feeling it aroused as ephemeral.

The conditions at the beginning present the obstacles Mr. Hamlin had to encounter. He was out of public life, and that in itself was a hindrance. There are few public men whose career was rounded out without a break, and there are few in American politics who once having sustained a serious reverse returned to oldtime power. There were some striking illustrations of this furnished among Mr. Hamlin's personal friends in the Senate, to go no farther. John P. Hale, after his signal career in the Senate, was badly defeated for re-election in 1865; Ben Wade was overwhelmed by the Democracy four years later, and could never get back to power; and Zachariah Chandler was upset

while apparently at the height of his career, though he subsequently regained his seat in the Senate. The moral effect of the reverses that Mr. Hamlin had suffered was undoubtedly a cloud over his prospects at the start, and there were many who were affected by it and opposed to him on that account. But the practical obstacles were even more discouraging. Mr. Morrill was in power and had the support of every federal office-holder in the State but three, and the help of Mr. Fessenden, Mr. Hale, Mr. Pike, and Mr. Lynch of the congressional delegation. Mr. Hamlin had but one influential office-holder on his side, ex-Governor Washburn, who was collector of Portland, and but one member of the congressional delegation in his behalf, John A. Peters, Mr. Blaine being neutral.

Mr. Morrill not only had the power in his hands, but he also had able lieutenants in John L. Stevens, chairman of the state committee, and his brother, Anson P. Morrill. Among other assistants who afterwards came to the front was Thomas B. Reed. Mr. Hamlin had to wage his campaign through the common people and a group of personal friends, some of whom belonged to the old anti-slavery guard of ante-bellum days. He was especially fortunate, it should be said before the narrative proceeds farther, in his lieutenants, — Sebastian S. Marble, of Waldoboro,<sup>1</sup> and Charles J. Talbot, of Wilton. Mr. Marble was recognized at this time as a political manager of pronounced ability. He was silent, cool, persistent, tenacious in his friendships, and had a wonderful knowledge of human nature. Mr. Talbot was an early anti-slavery leader, whose friendship and advice were constant factors in Mr. Hamlin's political career. After the campaign, in the opinion of competent observers Mr. Marble was ranked as the best politician in the contest next to Mr. Hamlin. He was subsequently still more active in Maine politics as United States marshal, and also as successor to Governor Bodwell, after the latter's death, when he gave the State a clean, able administration. Hiram Knowlton, a prominent lawyer of Skowhegan, was another valuable assistant. Josiah H. Drummond again exerted himself in Mr. Hamlin's behalf, and played an important part at two crises. A new figure of interest was Joseph H. Manley, who came to the front in this fight among the skillful tacticians of the day. Leander Valentine, General Samuel F. Hersey, Mark F. Wentworth, Hiram Ruggles, and others of Mr. Hamlin's personal friends were also of service to him.

Mr. Hamlin's campaign was conducted quietly; in fact, no one outside of his personal friends was informed at first authoritatively that he intended even to be a candidate for the Senate. There were two long years of careful watching and measuring of men. The slightest

<sup>1</sup> Samuel E. Spring, of Portland, and D. W. Ames, of Norridgewock, were other valuable supporters.





REPUBLICAN LEADERS IN MAINE.

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misstep might have caused infinite harm, with the power in the hands of the other side. The strain on Mr. Hamlin must have been intense. Once, years afterwards, he told Governor Marble that sometimes he would dream the 1869 fight all over, and wake up in a cold shiver, recalling a train of minor incidents which in combination won him the victory, and which, if fate had otherwise ruled, might have defeated him. One man who was elected to the House from Portland, pledged to Mr. Morrill, died before the legislature convened. Although Portland was Mr. Fessenden's stronghold, Mr. Hamlin's friends, after a sharp fight under the leadership of Mr. Drummond, nominated the latter to fill the vacancy. Had there been no vacancy to fill, or had Mr. Drummond been beaten, the vote between Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Morrill would have been a tie, and probably the latter would have won. It happened that in a town not far from Bangor a man was nominated, and pledged for Mr. Hamlin, who at heart favored Mr. Morrill, and would have supported him on another ballot. Figuring for a year or so for success on the narrow margin of one or two votes was not conducive to pleasant dreams.

When Mr. Morrill and his friends perceived that something was going on in Mr. Hamlin's camp, they organized a vigorous campaign, and for months the contest was the all-absorbing topic of conversation throughout the State, while elements which generally held aloof from politics were engaged. Mr. Hamlin made no professions as to his strength; he kept the details to himself, and by way of general instructions requested his followers to see that no attack was made on Mr. Morrill. This was in accordance with his inflexible rule, and he was not responsible for whatever outbreaks occurred during this stress of fever-pitch excitement. A good idea may be gained of the feeling when it is said that in some parts of the State business was practically suspended on the day of the caucus until the result was known. The hold Mr. Hamlin had on the people of Maine, irrespective of party, may be judged by the action of some of the leading Democrats of Bangor. William T. Pearson, Philo A. Strickland, Reuben S. Prescott, John Varney, and a few others, among them A. M. Robinson, of Dover, who were men of influence, quietly called on Mr. Hamlin to tell him that while they were Democrats they believed in him, and would even go to Augusta to use their influence with Democratic members of the legislature in case there was a bolt against him. Mr. Hamlin was naturally touched, but he declined their offers of assistance, and kept his contest within party lines.

There were many expressions outside of Maine which disclosed the national interest in the contest. Horace Greeley had opposed the nomination of any Lincoln man at Baltimore, although Mr. Hamlin's personal friend. In his impulsive, energetic way he called on Presi-



dent Johnson, through the columns of the "Tribune," to offer Mr. Hamlin a seat in his Cabinet, and now that Mr. Hamlin's return to public life was at stake, Greeley supported him strongly, and finally stationed one of his staff at Augusta to watch the contest. The Johnson issue necessarily entered into this campaign, and more to the advantage of Mr. Hamlin than to Mr. Morrill, although the latter had voted to remove the President. By one of those peculiar turns political contests sometimes take, Mr. Morrill lost ground on account of Mr. Fessenden's support, after the latter had voted to acquit President Johnson. On the other hand, it was represented by newspapers of national and state influence that Mr. Hamlin's return to the Senate would be a more decided rebuke to Johnson than Mr. Morrill's reelection, since the former had virtually organized the impeachment movement, or was at least conspicuously engaged in shaping it at the outset. The feeling in this respect may be judged by the following comment in the "Chicago Journal." Speaking of Mr. Hamlin's candidacy for the Senate, it said :—

"When the Republican party exchanged him for Andrew Johnson, it committed the great blunder of its life. . . . Ordinarily the senatorial question is local, and papers in other, especially in distant States, should not interfere ; but the whole country feels a peculiar interest in Hannibal Hamlin, and especially desires his return to the public service. Let Andrew Johnson be buried deep in the black waves of oblivion, living only on the rolls of the nation's dishonor, while Hannibal Hamlin is again ordered to the front. His election would be hailed with joy by the entire Republican party."

As soon as the Republican members of the legislature met at Augusta to make the nomination, an immense crowd descended on the little city. The friends of Mr. Morrill were perfectly confident of his success, and up to this time had not felt disturbed ; in fact they claimed his nomination by twenty or thirty majority. But they were somewhat disturbed over the quiet confidence of Mr. Hamlin and his followers. A pen picture in the "Tribune" described Mr. Hamlin as smiling and confident among scenes of excitement which stirred even strangers. An incident then happened which further discomposed the Morrill men. One of them, while standing among a crowd of excited partisans, shouted, "One hundred to fifty, Morrill is nominated by at least twenty majority on the first ballot !" "What's that ?" some one called out. Looking around, the crowd saw that the speaker was Hiram Bliss, a well-known Republican from Knox County. The bet was repeated, and Mr. Bliss with a quiet smile of satisfaction said to Joseph L. Smith, of Old Town, a strong supporter of Mr. Hamlin : "Take that bet Joe, and you will win." If a thunderbolt had been shot out of the sky the Morrill men could not have

been more surprised. Some over-enthusiastic friends of Mr. Morrill had claimed Mr. Bliss, but there was no warrant for it ; he had always been Mr. Hamlin's friend, and for a year had kept his decision to himself and Mr. Hamlin.

Another loss was also reported about the same time. The circumstances of this case might strike the careless as rather amusing, yet they are only a touching proof of the love some of the strong, serene, and God-fearing men who worked through life with Mr. Hamlin bore for him. Hiram Ruggles, of Carmel, was a man of the type described. He was always close to Mr. Hamlin, and was one of the few men who addressed him by his first name. One member of the House, whose constituents favored Mr. Hamlin, got the idea into his head that Mr. Morrill was sure to win, and therefore felt that he would like to be on the victorious side. In Mr. Ruggles's eyes duty was a religious force, and when he found this representative about to disappoint his own constituents, he appealed to him with all the fervor of a sincere Christian. But he could not shake the obstinate member in his decision, and accordingly accompanied him to Augusta. There Mr. Ruggles induced him to share the same room, and when they were alone together, Mr. Ruggles kneeled and prayed with the earnestness of one whose heart and soul were devoted to the cause he had espoused. The efficacy of prayer was proved in this instance, and Mr. Hamlin's election was saved.

But in spite of these encouragements the contest was so close, in Mr. Hamlin's judgment, that he could not feel absolutely certain of success until he had been nominated. He met with several disappointments which threatened to offset the advantages gained. Several men held the balance of power, and until the last moment it was impossible to tell how they would vote ; in fact no one ever learned how two men did vote. At this stage of the contest, when the members of the legislature were about to enter the caucus, there were four men who gave both sides a veritable nightmare. The cold facts may be given about one, elected by the friends of Mr. Hamlin, and to whom he was pledged. He was of a mercenary disposition. He wrote Mr. Hamlin, saying that he would vote for him if he could have the collectorship of a certain port, and could also be the Hamlin candidate for speaker of the House. Mr. Hamlin replied in these words, which he repeated to his friends several times in telling the story : " I never in my life promised a man an office for his vote, and I never will, but I will say that I shall be faithful to those who are faithful to me." The office-hunter was not satisfied, and obtained from an indiscreet friend of Mr. Morrill a promise of the places he wanted. Mr. Hamlin's friends, however, elected Mr. Drummond speaker, and in the end the place-hunter got nothing.

The final instance to be detailed was one which kept both sides alternating between the joys of anticipated success and the gloom of possible defeat. The member from Mars Hill was a long-remembered figure in this affair. He was originally for Mr. Morrill, but his constituents favored Mr. Hamlin, and as the close of the contest approached, they held some public meetings to urge him to vote for Mr. Hamlin. But he had publicly announced his intention to support Mr. Morrill, and what could he do? The facts were presented to Mr. Hamlin, who turned to John A. Peters, and said: "I want you to advise that man that he can throw a blank ballot." The member from Mars Hill promised that he would do this, and this closed the canvassing preliminary to the holding of the caucus. The ballot was then taken in a moment of breathless excitement, and the result was Mr. Hamlin had 75 votes, Mr. Morrill 74, while one blank vote was thrown. Mr. Hamlin's friends claimed his nomination, but the Morrill men asserted that the blank vote should be counted, and no choice declared. Thomas B. Reed delivered his maiden parliamentary speech in favor of this contention. Another ballot was called for amidst the uproar, and when Mr. Hamlin was appealed to, he replied with all his decision: "No; blanks don't count. I am nominated, and shall stick."

The casting of a blank vote was nothing new. Mr. Hamlin's ample knowledge of parliamentary rules and precedents stood him in stead at the decisive moment. He knew that in several disputed contests in England a blank vote had been cast and not enumerated in the sum total. Excluding the blank vote cast in this instance he had 75 votes and Mr. Morrill 74, or a majority of one—his talismanic number. But the presiding officer of the caucus, who, it must be said, exhibited unnecessary partisanship, refused to entertain Mr. Drummond's motion declaring Mr. Hamlin the nominee, and the caucus broke up in confusion. This was unfortunate for Mr. Morrill, and induced him to entertain false hopes. Some of his followers prepared to organize a bolt, and he came back from Washington, but as he entered Augusta he learned that some of his friends in the Kennebec delegation had issued a card bearing their belief that Mr. Hamlin had been fairly nominated, and that they proposed to support him. The point they made was a vital thrust to the bolt. They said that if Mr. Morrill had received 75 votes instead of 74 his friends would have claimed the nomination for him. This settled the hardest fight Mr. Hamlin ever had. The next week he was formally elected, and in the following March entered the Senate with a new generation.



## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE GRANT ADMINISTRATIONS

IN the summer of 1868 the Republican party nominated General U. S. Grant for President, and Schuyler Colfax for Vice-President. Mr. Hamlin was urged by many friends to become a candidate for Vice-President, and his renomination was advocated by leading party newspapers, but he declined, and continued his canvass for senator. The delegates from Maine and Illinois, however, united in giving him a complimentary vote. The incident that pleased Mr. Hamlin most in this affair was the presentation of his name by General George F. Shepley, who in ante-bellum days had been one of his most determined but sincere opponents in the Democratic party. In the campaign Mr. Hamlin did his share of work, and thus it happened that his return to public life was coincident with a new generation of leaders, and the adjustment of new issues as well as old ones. The period was anomalous, and the responsibility resting on the Republican party was hardly less great than that which the civil war had brought. The wrongs of the Johnson administration were to be undone, as far as possible, reconstruction was to be accomplished in the South, the national debt to be paid, and foreign questions growing out of the Alabama case, involving the dangers of war, to be settled.

Mr. Hamlin believed that the spirit of unrest which followed the war was in a large measure responsible for the errors and scandals of the Grant administrations. He emphasized this in his sober judgment of this period, and dwelt on war as a demoralizing factor which was long felt in the life of a country. This was reflected in the administrations, and was seen the more clearly the farther the nation got away from that time. But at the same time he saw Grant standing out as a greater figure than the historians of that period had yet drawn him, and as a President of larger statesmanship than had been conceded to him. His mistakes grew out of his inexperience, the simplicity of his nature, and tenacious friendship for his intimates. When he came without political experience to the presidency, he had the notion that he ought to conduct his administration as he had his military campaigns, that is, he intended to confide his plans to no one, and determined to order their execution without explanation. But

the development of this simple, silent soldier into the far-seeing statesman, who saved the nation's credit though resisting party leaders, who won the admiration of his opponents at arms and established the principle of arbitration, was his best eulogy and answer to his critics. Mr. Hamlin asserted as his final estimate that the three men who grew on him the most were Webster, Lincoln, and Grant.<sup>1</sup>

Senator Hamlin formed his acquaintance with General Grant during the civil war, when the latter was coming forward as the soldier hero of the conflict. The country did not know at the time, and probably never will know, the entire story of Grant's struggle to get command of all the Union forces and keep in command. After he had obtained the support of the administration he made war on a scale so much larger than that which the nation was accustomed to that there were fierce assaults on him, and some howling dervish applied the epithet of "butcher." Mr. Hamlin was one of the leaders and counselors around President Lincoln who backed him up in his support of General Grant. Mr. Hamlin appreciated the stern necessities of war, and he commended Grant as a soldier who knew how to move ahead and who did not know how to retreat. After the war he hailed Grant as the military genius of the age, and applauded his admirable and honorable conduct when the cunning Johnson tried to make a cat's-paw of him. Mr. Hamlin did not advocate Grant's nomination for President, but supported him as the nominee, and when General Grant was elected, he recognized a friend in Mr. Hamlin, and their relations were always cordial.

The composition of the Senate had materially changed since Mr. Hamlin was last connected with it, and showed a striking blending of elements. The old anti-slavery guard was still represented in Messrs. Hamlin, Chandler, Wilson, Howe, Sumner, Fessenden, Trumbull, and others, though the first four of this picturesque group were the most conspicuous members who adjusted themselves successfully to the new issues, and remained in touch with their party. It was a period of new issues and new leaders. Roscoe Conkling, John Sherman, Justin S. Morrill, George F. Edmunds, Henry B. Anthony, Matthew H. Carpenter, Reuben E. Fenton, John A. Logan, William Windom, Oliver P. Morton, Alexander Ramsey, and others, who rose to distinction in the Senate during this period, constituted a strong and interesting force of Republicans. Allen G. Thurman was the most notable addition to the Democratic side of the House, and lent strength both to the Senate and his party. Another Democrat of distinction was Thomas F. Bayard, of Delaware. The temporary disappearance of the old Southern régime was marked in the appearance of Frederick A. Sawyer, William Pitt Kellogg, Adelbert Ames,

<sup>1</sup> This is the essence of Senator Hamlin's eulogy on Grant, August, 1885.



LATER ASSOCIATES IN CONGRESS.





and other men of Northern birth in its place. The presence of Hiram R. Revels, a colored man, in the place of Jefferson Davis, possessed a significance which would be difficult to find in the downfall of the aristocracy in the French Revolution. The succession of William A. Buckingham, of Connecticut, to a senator who supported Johnson was another visible proof of the extinction of the anomalous Johnson party.

Mr. Hamlin believed that the Senate was improved rather than weakened by these changes. He was a practical optimist. He believed that the world grew better as it grew older, and he believed, too, that every age produced its strong men to solve its problems. When he felt himself growing old he voluntarily retired from public life in full faith that young men could carry on the work of the nation. He lived in the present, never in the past. He disliked that weepy expression, "there were giants in those days," when it was used to disparage the men of his own times. He recognized the fact that the times had changed, and that the new period had brought men to accomplish a different line of work. He associated himself with Conkling, Logan, Windom, and others of the younger group, while he also maintained close relations with Thurman, Buckingham, and others of his older friends. These were the kind of men he liked, and with whom he worked best. But Mr. Hamlin's personal relations form a topic by itself. The purpose was to show that he identified himself with the steady working and progressive element of his party and the Senate.

When Mr. Hamlin came back to public life his enforced retirement appears to have whetted his appetite for work, and possibly his experience as presiding officer of the Senate increased his dislike for talk. All this was noticeable at the outset of his reëntrance. He was of the opinion that the Senate had a better working capacity than ever, and he was anxious that it should transact public business rather than waste time in oratory. There was a small group of persistent talkers, headed by Carl Schurz, then of Missouri, who were a thorn in his side. On several occasions Senator Hamlin made some pungent remarks. Once he said, "You cannot find a day or an hour of the session when we do not violate our rules, or procrastinate the business of the Senate by violating the rules. The order of business of the Senate is for the Senate to be out of order." Another time he said, "The practice heretofore has been to postpone business on a motion to allow discussion upon the merit of everything above the earth or beneath the sky." On a third occasion he declared, "There is a time when these interminable debates ought to end, and there is a time which the Senate should devote to that matter and stop them, if they can be stopped by law and decency. . . . It pains my ear, it

pains 'my heart, to see this procrastination." These plainly worded protests started a lively comment in the daily press, and Mr. Hamlin was commended for his course.

But it was not alone in the Senate that Mr. Hamlin enforced his ideas; in the committees he performed his hardest work, and while his associates were mostly congenial there were a few exceptions. Little ever escaped from Mr. Hamlin reflecting on men in his relations with them behind the scenes; but fortunately one incident came to light which showed that he lived in the present, and sought to recognize talent near him. Of the verbose senators who annoyed him there were several who have that peculiar delight common to some men of weeping over "the degenerate times," and which corresponds to the comfort lachrymose widows take in contemplating their weeds. One of these senators, who abused Grant because he could not get what he wanted, began to deplore "the degenerate times," and extol "the days when there were giants." Congressman S. F. Barr, who was present, remembered the incident. Senator Hamlin turned to the mourners with the courtesy and dignity of a Roman, and asked whether they had known the giants they lamented. He himself had, and he briefly recalled the facts that Webster gave the latter part of his life in trying to make New England become a community of slave-catchers; that Clay always sought to compromise vital questions; that Calhoun taught doctrines which had led to disunion. Turning to Simon Cameron, who was also present, Mr. Hamlin recalled that when they two entered the Senate members often addressed it with whiskey on their desks, while at the end of the day's session one third went home in a state of intoxication, and one half at the close of an executive session. Thus he was of the opinion that the times and the Senate had improved.

Many more stories were told of the practical and original way in which Mr. Hamlin sometimes asserted himself when the Senate was wasting its time. During the negotiations over the establishment of arbitration, there was a great deal of heat, and an ill-timed speech or action by Congress or Parliament at a certain critical moment might have caused infinite mischief. There was a rumor that Great Britain had rejected the treaty. A senator, who while he was a man of high rank nevertheless lacked discretion, arose and offered a resolution calling on the Secretary of State to furnish all telegrams to the Senate which had passed between the governments in the last twenty-four hours. The presumption was that the senator wanted to meddle and have an opportunity to talk. Mr. Hamlin tersely remarked that "absolute silence was often the greatest wisdom." "But," interposed the senator with some pomposity, "will my friend from Maine inform me how I can obtain the information I desire if the Senate does not



request it from the Secretary of State?" "By doing what I did five minutes ago — make a personal inquiry at the State Department," Mr. Hamlin replied amid a general laugh. On another occasion at the end of a long-drawn session, Mr. Sumner introduced a foolish bill pledging Congress not to adjourn until it had settled all problems growing out of the war as far as it could by acts of legislation. Reconciliation, Ku-Klux outrages, rights of negroes, and other questions were included and enumerated. Congress had been trying in vain to settle these things, but they could no more be adjusted by acts of legislation at that time than by a pope's bull. Mr. Hamlin observed that it was time to sing "Old Hundred." There was a roar, and that finished the bill.

While Mr. Hamlin spoke even less during the last twelve years he sat in the Senate than he had in ante-bellum days, he nevertheless exerted greater influence in shaping legislation. John A. Peters, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Maine, was in the House three terms during this period, and was associated with Mr. Hamlin in the transaction of an immense volume of public business. In his reminiscences of his experiences in Congress, Judge Peters said that in his opinion, and in that of his Republican colleagues, no man ever sat in Congress in Mr. Hamlin's lifetime who had as much personal power as he had. He was not only honored as one of the fathers of the Republican party and the surviving active counselor of Lincoln, but he was also highly respected as a senator by even the bitter partisans on the Democratic side. He was delightful in his personal relations with congressmen, and while he often stated his convictions tersely, the charm and courtesy of his manner left his words without a sting. Judge Peters instanced, in illustration of this, the rebuke which Mr. Hamlin administered the Senate, to which allusion has been made; and to exemplify Mr. Hamlin's power he recalled an incident wherein Mr. Hamlin induced Congress to pass an important bill in aid of the European and North American Railway of Maine, without a single speech being made in either house. A voluble New England senator of unfortunate habits started to say something. Mr. Hamlin half rose in his seat, and said in a stage whisper, "For God's sake, stop that man." Somebody choked him off, and the bill passed.

George H. Shirley wrote General Hamlin: "Your father was very kind-hearted and obliging, often making great sacrifices to do favors for his friends. One day, Chester A. Arthur, then collector of the port of New York, sent for me, then an officer in the custom-house, and said I would gratify him if I would go to Washington and ask Senator Hamlin to effect the passage of a measure through Congress that he was interested in; he felt sure *he* could do it. I was surprised, because I knew that Senator Conkling was his friend and

a man of great intellectual ability. I went, and I think the collector was satisfied with my mission. All the persons I met with at the Capitol said that no other member had so great personal influence in Congress as he had."

Necessarily, Mr. Hamlin's personal friendships played an interesting and important part in his later career in the Senate. While he rarely appeared in debate, and hostile critics, who knew nothing about the immense work he accomplished in his quiet way, complained that his career was not brilliant, his associations and positions on committees indicate the place he held in the Senate. Perhaps he found Thurman the most congenial and effective co-worker he had in the Senate. They had qualities in common, and both abhorred the voluble senators who talked to hear themselves talk. There were many interesting anecdotes floating around in the newspapers at that time, about the cordial coöperation between the old Carthaginian and the old Roman in the transaction of public business. Party differences never came between them, and they left the Senate together as warm friends as when they entered it. Windom was another solid and substantial senator who was always close to Mr. Hamlin both in and out of public duties. Logan was the personification of loyalty and conviction, and, though somewhat dogmatic and narrow, was a very useful senator. Buckingham, Mr. Hamlin once said, was a true example of the Christian gentleman and faithful public servant. But the most interesting friendship Mr. Hamlin formed was with Roscoe Conkling, which is an interesting episode.

Mr. Hamlin regarded Conkling as a great man, who always acted on a large scale, whether in right or wrong, and while some of his qualities antagonized men, his superior ability, honesty, loyalty, and courage bound his friends to him as with hooks of steel. It not unfrequently happens that a close friendship is the outgrowth of a misunderstanding. This was the case with Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Conkling. When the latter entered the Senate he was on his mettle, and had several tilts with veteran members. He had an encounter with Mr. Hamlin, and drew such a reply that he perceived that he had made a mistake. He liked spirit, and at once treated Mr. Hamlin with that respect due him and his rank. After they came to understand each other, a strong liking grew up between them, and their correspondence on the death of Mr. Hamlin's daughter revealed the manly love Conkling had for his old friend. It was generally believed in the Senate that Mr. Hamlin had more personal influence over Conkling than any other man in Congress. The newspaper gossip had not a little about their relations. The "New York Times" (January 30, 1881), speaking of Mr. Hamlin's place in the Senate, said, after sketching his career, "To-day his figure is the most familiar and in many respects the

most noteworthy one in it (the Senate). His seat is next to that of Roscoe Conkling. . . . With his neighbor he has always been on the best of terms. In many things the younger and not always mild-mannered senator defers to him, and it is no uncommon sight to see the two in earnest consultation regarding some affairs of state, or laughing over a good joke."

Senator Hamlin continued to adhere to his practice of devoting his time and energies to the transaction of public business to the exclusion of special lines of work, in which he might have won for himself a higher reputation. It was perhaps natural for some writers, who knew him only by reputation, and judged of his knowledge of state affairs by his simple and general speeches, to conclude that he did not have a taste for financial and tariff problems, and it was also natural for other writers to suppose that he was not a student. But they all erred. While Mr. Hamlin never obtruded his information on people, his familiarity with the practical subjects of life was also a source of surprise, even to those who knew him best. He would not produce facts and statistics, but in a quiet, well-digested remark would show that he had investigated even the details of the matter under discussion, and knew all about it. In the Senate his range of information was disclosed by his brief corrections of error in statements, and by sharp and intelligent questions, rather than by an extended communication of his own knowledge. His brief, original, and characteristic comments were the precipitate of an immense amount of detail which had long been working in his mind.

The practical work in which Mr. Hamlin was first engaged when he returned to the Senate did not at first impress itself on the public mind, and as he rarely spoke of his acts, it was not known how much he had to do with the improvement of the city of Washington. In a preceding chapter a description of the national capital was given as it appeared when Mr. Hamlin entered the House. He was disgusted, and long advocated improvements. But Congress granted niggardly appropriations, and it was not until Grant became President that the reform was accomplished which transformed the straggling and dirty place into one of the finest cities in the world. But the reformation of Washington is well known, and the story of Mr. Hamlin's share in this work might be of interest if space allowed. He was chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, and firmly supported Alexander R. Shepherd in carrying out his magnificent plans for developing the national capital into a beautiful and healthy city. He had not a little to do with inducing Congress to pass an appropriation of \$5,000,000 to make the improvements, he steadily consulted Governor Shepherd on his plans, assisted him to push them through Congress, and otherwise helped him all he could. The only criticism he



made was that perhaps Governor Shepherd's prodigious energy carried him on too fast for the taxpayers, though he was certain due credit would be given him in time for his honesty and zeal.

Another line of work which exacted much of Mr. Hamlin's time was the postal service. He interested himself in this, it will be recalled, when a member of the Maine legislature, and had helped push various reform measures to cheapen postage while he was in the House. During a part of his latter-day service in the Senate he was chairman of the Committee on Post-offices and Post-roads, and thus followed up his labors of other days. But his silence about himself and his practical withdrawal from discussion in the Senate render it impossible to record the details of his work. His principal objects were to extend the postal service and maintain as high a standard of efficiency as possible on a self-supporting basis. The "Congressional Record" bears testimony to this in bills he introduced to these ends. It was the opinion of ex-Postmaster-General Horatio King, who continued his residence in Washington after leaving public life, and maintained his interest in the postal service, that Mr. Hamlin's work in developing this branch of the government was of inestimable value; and though it could not be fully described, would yet remain appreciated by those who knew his great weight in shaping legislation from stage to stage without appearing before the public; and understood his wonderful grasp of the practical needs of the country and the best way to meet them.<sup>1</sup>

Only the barest outline can be given of the reforms Mr. Hamlin helped effect in the postal service when chairman of the Committee on Post-offices. The story is an epitome of his methods and record as a worker in the Senate. When he became chairman of this committee, he was convinced that the postal laws needed a thorough overhauling. After an exhaustive investigation, he made, on April 5, 1876, a unique speech, that, as a statistical effort, illustrates how figures can be made eloquent. He showed that the deficit in the revenues of the Post-office Department for that fiscal year would be about \$10,000,000, and that it would increase yearly unless merchandise and newspapers were compelled to pay their just share of the cost of their transmission through the mail. The revenue from letters, on the other hand, far exceeded the expense of transmission. He advocated a reclassification of merchandise, and new rates, with a sliding scale adjusted to distance, except for letters. Newspaper editors who never read the "Congressional Record" meanly abused Mr. Hamlin; but he turned the scales neatly by showing that their rates

<sup>1</sup> Mr. King wrote the *Bangor Daily News* of July 13, 1891, a more extended account of Mr. Hamlin's labors as chairman of the Committee on Post-offices, and his successful efforts to help Mr. King obtain the adoption of the penalty envelope.

practically amounted to a subsidy of \$7,000,000, while they were advocating the abolishment of the franking privilege to congressmen in the discharge of official duties. But the support of his bill by the Post-office Department, its passage by Congress, and the adoption of the two-cent stamp Mr. Hamlin had worked for were ample vindication and a testimonial to his labors.

But to continue the record of Senator Hamlin's routine labors would burden the narrative ; and yet to dismiss it briefly might be an injustice. The story of a faithful worker in the Senate is one of unremitting toil in examining bills, claims, and measures of public and private interest, and patient watching to carry them on to success, or send them to defeat. The calls the public make on great-hearted public servants are also to be remembered, although few become known. The side of this kind of life which the public sees is generally unrelieved, though now and then a pathetic or interesting incident comes to light which brings out the personal qualities of the actor against a dull background. The demands on Mr. Hamlin were even increased, and while he had once been as erect as an Indian sachem, he now began to stoop from bending over his desk in answering the almost countless appeals made to him. His kindness of heart encouraged many to write him who had no claims on his time ; and his passion for promptness contributed to keep him in the treadmill. They tell a story at Kendall's Mills, Maine, to illustrate his promptness. Some men who desired to start a national bank at that place wrote Senator Hamlin and another prominent member of the Maine delegation, asking them to obtain the charter. Their replies were received by the same mail. The other man said that the charter could not be obtained ; Mr. Hamlin's letter contained the charter itself.

Senator Hamlin naturally had a part in the prominent incidents of the Grant administration, though he preferred his work in the Senate, and did not wish to be one of the counselors of the President ; yet he was often called to the White House to give advice on state and party politics. Mr. Hamlin regarded Grant as one of the most prompt and honest men he ever knew. His word was his bond, and he would usually do more than he promised to do. He had sound ideas of statesmanship, and improved with experience in office. He was not the sphinx among his friends that he was among strangers. He talked well, and could tell a good story with a grim humor of his own, and enjoyed a friendly thrust at himself. Judge Peters related an amusing incident which evidenced Grant's willingness to take a good joke at his own expense. A convention of physicians was held at Washington, and among them was Dr. Calvin S. Seavey, a once famous practitioner of the old school, who lived in Bangor. He was a bluff old Democrat, and refused to call on the President in com-

pany with his brother physicians. Mr. Hamlin, however, induced him to change his mind, and in introducing him said, "General, Dr. Seavey said that he would not pay his respects to a man who had killed as many men as you have until I told him that he had killed more than you had." Grant fairly shook with laughter, and he and the bluff old doctor struck up a friendship.

The leading issue of the day — the shameful treatment of the negro — was the one public question that hung over Mr. Hamlin the rest of his life like a black cloud. He was in accord with President Grant, and when the Southern Bourbons were restored to power through systematic murder, intimidation, and disenfranchisement of the colored voters, he did his share of work in investigating the crimes committed by the Ku-Klux Klan and similar murderous organizations. He never ceased denouncing this infamy, and he reproached his own party for cowardice as severely as he castigated the Democratic party for its responsibility. He clung to his original doctrine that if the negro was properly treated he would develop into a useful citizen just as surely as he developed into a good soldier. He insisted that the negro should be educated and protected in his rights. The charge that he was "waving the bloody shirt" affected him about as much as the charge in ante-bellum days that he was a "false friend of the Union" for opposing the extension of human slavery. This came from the same men who tried to keep the negro in slavery, and after his emancipation sought to crush him. Mr. Hamlin regretted the frauds incidental to carpet-bag government, but in his eyes they were dwarfed by the wholesale crimes committed against the Southern negro by his white enemies.

Mr. Hamlin had no sympathy with that sentiment which would arrest the progress of the colored race through the indulgence of vain regrets. The Republican party was not as a body originally inclined to bestow the franchise on the negro; Mr. Hamlin at first favored it. But if the negro's vote was not counted because of lawless opposition, was that the fault of the black man? How could a country with consistency avenge an insult to a citizen in a distant land and yet allow thousands of its citizens to be maltreated within its own borders? Mr. Hamlin did not concern himself about deportation nor speculate as to whether the African, after having been Americanized, would civilize his own continent; he wanted a practical settlement of the question on the lines of law, solemn pledges, and the urgent necessities of the case. He would have the negro protected by the law, but he would also have him worthy of his citizenship. His Christianity knew no color, race, or creed. He was consistent. Frederick Douglass he received as his guest, not as a remarkable man. He was pained to see his party finally abandon the negro question, but he was



rejoiced and felt vindicated when he saw the colored man building his churches, colleges, and schools, sending his sons to Harvard and other great institutions of learning, and raising up his Booker Washington and other leaders to guide his people in the right path. Perhaps the Spartan-like treatment the negro received brought out the stern stuff in him, but he deserved better treatment than he obtained.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hamlin's attitude towards the granting of amnesty to Southern leaders in the civil war was, of course, the practical demonstration of his feelings. Excluding a few responsible leaders, he had only one test, and that was whether the applicant would honestly support the government if restored to citizenship. He honored Johnston, Longstreet, Gordon, and other sincere Southern soldiers for the moral courage they displayed in accepting the situation. Their account was clear. But he could not listen to the ill-timed pleas for Jefferson Davis and other leaders who still upheld "the lost cause." He did not see the consistency in offering pardon to Johnston, who asked for it and pledged his honor to support the government, and in bestowing amnesty on Jefferson Davis, who did not wish it, and was still hostile to the Union. He regretted the foolish charge that to class Davis as a traitor was to include those who had stood by him. They were deceived. He saw with sorrow the unfortunate movement originated to honor Davis's birthday; and the last public act of his life was to ask the people of the nation to honor the birthday of the man who saved it. He could not forget nor forgive those who had betrayed their trust and their people, when they should have stood firm, or those who suffered Union soldiers to rot in Andersonville and Libby prisons.

Senator Hamlin's position was well known. He never gushed; he always showed by his personal attitude what he thought of men. In his relations with the "rebel brigadiers" in Congress he measured men for what they were worth, and considered their circumstances. He well knew General John B. Gordon, for example, and while regretting the peculiar politics of Georgia, he often emphatically spoke of Gordon as a man of honor, a sincere supporter of the Union, and of the best type of true Southern chivalry. This was before Gordon took up his work of reconciliation, and well he thereafter justified this opinion of him. Lamar, of Mississippi, was another Southerner

<sup>1</sup> Three weeks before his death, Mr. Hamlin wrote Butler R. Wilson, a prominent colored lawyer of Boston, in part as follows in answer to some questions in regard to the betrayal of the Lodge federal election bill:—

"I am entirely out of political life and at my age I desire to keep out of politics, though still an earnest Republican, and, I am sure, an earnest friend of our colored fellow-citizens. I have been disappointed and disgusted at the course of some prominent Republicans, and detest the action of the Democratic party. It has been outrageous, while some Republicans have sadly failed in their duty."

of somewhat similar circumstances and noble qualities, Mr. Hamlin esteemed as a man. But these were instances of personal worth, and, if space permitted, they might be multiplied to show how little partisanship remained in him. Mr. Hamlin remained implacable to the end to those who sought no forgiveness and tried to keep the old fires burning. Years after the war William B. and James A. Dole, of Bangor, who had served in the Union army, called on Jefferson Davis at his home. "You came from Bangor," said he. "There is where my dear old friend of other days lives, — Hannibal Hamlin. If ever there was an honest man it is he."

Senator Hamlin was one of the Republican leaders who supported President Grant from beginning to end in his peace policy, and was one of the Republican senators who helped save the principle of arbitration when its fate was trembling in the balance. The establishment of arbitration, Mr. Hamlin early claimed, was the crowning triumph of the soldier President's career, and the part he played is of peculiar interest, as the facts will demonstrate. When General Grant came to the presidency he desired peace. He won the friendship of Joseph E. Johnston, James Longstreet, John S. Mosby, and other noted Confederate soldiers. He also sought to arbitrate the claims of the government against Great Britain for the damage done to Northern shipping by the rebel cruiser *Alabama*. It was a common saying at the time that if Grant had favored war, he could have united the North and South at a blow on a basis of their mutual feelings against England, and thereby perpetuated himself in the presidency. It was claimed that Grant could have placed an army of two millions of men in the field. Perhaps a foreign war would have paved the way for reconciliation quicker than the slow healing process of time; but while it was Grant's profession to fight, it is to his undying credit that he did not yield to clamor and temptation. He did not succeed without a hard struggle, and his statesmanship and that of his supporters now shine in contrast to the conduct of his opponents.

The incident that threatened at one time to wreck the arbitration policy was the quarrel in which Charles Sumner engaged the Republican party, and which resulted in his dismissal from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations. This originated in a personal controversy Sumner had with President Grant and Secretary Fish, and which he complicated with the issue of arbitration. The merits of this once famous affair do not concern this volume, since they did not affect Mr. Hamlin. Only the main points need be presented. The patience, practicality, magnanimity, and truthfulness of Grant are now universally recognized, and if Sumner had any justification for his breach with Grant, he erred in making a personal issue with him on questions of state. But when Grant sent to the Senate

the treaty annexing Santo Domingo, Sumner attacked it, and had the bad judgment to reflect severely on the administration when it was known how he felt towards Grant. His disclaimer of personal feelings in the matter did not help him. He followed this up with an extraordinary speech assailing Great Britain, and charging that the damages due the United States because of injuries to our shipping, for which England was morally responsible, during the civil war, amounted to millions and millions of dollars. He subsequently capped the climax of his folly by stigmatizing Grant as the "great quarreler" in the face of his pacific policy, while he himself was quarreling with the President, the Secretary of State, and was on non-speaking terms with half his colleagues in the Senate.

Mr. Hamlin was a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and therefore saw all the ins and outs of this affair. He was heartily in favor of arbitration, and desired to see cordial relations between all English-speaking people. He was also on friendly terms with Sumner, having forgiven him for the intrigue he inspired in the presidential convention of 1864. Sumner had tried to make atonement by offering Mr. Hamlin the collectorship of Boston, and also by attempting to help him get an election to the Senate in 1865 and 1869 by writing letters to members of the Maine legislature. He was unfeignedly glad to see Mr. Hamlin back in the Senate, and signalized his return by giving him a dinner. But when Senator Hamlin found Sumner trying to rupture the Republican party, destroy the administration, and stir up ill-feeling between the United States and Great Britain, his attitude towards Sumner underwent a change. There was a serious division of opinion among good men as to whether Sumner should be deposed. Mr. Hamlin, for one, now regarded him as a dangerous man, and when Sumner finally succeeded in bringing about a deadlock between the Senate and the State Department, and the transaction of public business became impossible, Mr. Hamlin voted with Conkling, Edmunds, Howe, and others to remove him from the office he was using to the detriment of international and party safety.

But the quarrel did not cease with Sumner's ejectment; it was now "anything to beat Grant." And although the author of all this trouble was no longer on the Committee on Foreign Relations, he was ably represented by his *fidus Achates*, — Carl Schurz, who had a talent for mischief. The Grant haters carried on their fight in the committee. One important witness is Samuel F. Barr, then the clerk of the committee, and subsequently a member of the House. In his personal account to the author he made it clear that the treaty of arbitration was resisted to the last ditch. The favorite practice of the conspirators was to introduce amendments which were framed



to kill it, and it was Mr. Schurz's part to introduce the amendments, though it was not known whether he was their author. Secretary Fish informed Mr. Cameron and Mr. Barr that the treaty was the result of mutual concessions, and that any amendment would lead to its rejection. The vote in the committee was doubtful, the Democrats being opposed to the treaty, together with Schurz, while there was another Republican member who was so analytical by nature that there was danger of his talking himself into opposition. Mr. Fish, to checkmate the amendment conspiracy, sent Assistant Secretary J. C. Bancroft Davis before the committee with the stenographic report of the high joint commission which had drawn up the treaty. Then followed an anxious moment, and an interesting scene in which Mr. Hamlin made short work of Carl Schurz.

When this important report had been read, Schurz bobbed up with more amendments and with the desire to talk. Mr. Hamlin moved to lay all amendments on the table. Schurz angrily inquired his reason, and he promptly answered that the report had shown that any amendment would be fatal to the treaty, and any amendment likely to be proposed would be trivial. "I am for the treaty," said he. The motion was put. The analytical Republican joined in voting for it and it was just carried. This shut off further debate, and the treaty was passed. Had it been killed in committee, the Senate of course would never have acted. Schurz flung down his papers in disgust and bounced out of the room, while Mr. Hamlin rejoiced with his colleagues over their victory. Thus the principle of arbitration was established. The people reelected Grant by an immense majority. Massachusetts, Sumner's own State, gave Grant and Wilson 75,000 majority. Sumner's friends called his deposal "brutal." Mr. Hamlin said that it was a "brutal necessity." To-day the mistakes of the Grant administration are forgotten, while the English-speaking world honors his name as that of the "great peacemaker" of the age.

The presidential campaign of 1872 was one that taught the political parties better manners, if nothing more. Grant was maligned no less outrageously than Greeley was ridiculed. Mr. Hamlin took a very active part in this campaign; and while he was indignant at the attacks on Grant, he was nevertheless pained at the brutal ridicule heaped on Greeley, for whom he had an affectionate regard, and whom he believed to be honest and true, — the people's editor, — however quixotic and unpractical he might be. Maine was flooded with prominent speakers at that time, and yet after a lapse of more than a quarter of a century, the speech Senator Hamlin made seems to be the best remembered. It is a curious fact that he was at his best away from the cities and newspapers. A lifelong friend who stumped with

him in this campaign was Judge Samuel F. Humphrey, one of the leading citizens of Bangor and several times its mayor. He recalled Mr. Hamlin's defense of Grant as the most convincing he heard. He vindicated Grant on the same lines on which the great soldier President's fame now rests. His argument was so simple that it did not seem to be an oratorical effort. But it was the *ars celare artem*, and in two hours he completely exhausted the subject, leaving nothing for those who followed him. Mr. Hamlin did not stoop to ridicule Greeley, as has been intimated, but he effectively ridiculed the Bourbons who supported him.

An interesting glimpse of the relations between Senator Hamlin and President Grant and Senator Conkling is afforded in an incident that followed the death of Chief Justice Chase. President Grant desired to appoint Conkling to this exalted position; but he had the presidential fever, and declined. The President made two ill-advised nominations, and then considered Morrison R. Waite. There was not a little embarrassment at the time, and while he was thinking about Mr. Waite, Senator Hamlin and Senator Howe came to the conclusion that he might induce Conkling to reconsider his declination. Their reason was that this would relieve the situation of all embarrassment, and prevent the danger of another refusal of the Senate to confirm the nomination, and that, furthermore, another tender would demonstrate that the office sought the man, not the man the office. It should be added that Mr. Hamlin believed that Conkling was a man of the highest order of ability and of unimpeachable honesty of character. He asserted, also, that he had greater forensic ability than Webster or Clay. He thought that if Conkling would leave the stormy arena of politics for the judicial calm of the Supreme Bench, he would develop into a masterful chief justice. President Grant authorized Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Howe to reopen the matter, but Conkling declined to reconsider.<sup>1</sup> But if he had —

Several more important incidents must be compressed. Mr. Hamlin supported President Grant in his veto of the reckless inflation bill that was passed through Congress by a combination of Democrats and Republicans. He also opposed the vulgar salary-grab bill, and refused to accept the back pay of five thousand dollars which was tendered him by the Treasury Department. He was appointed chairman of the special committee chosen to investigate the partisan charge brought by the maddened Grant haters, that the President had profited financially by the sale of the French arms. The death of his brother Elijah, however, prevented him from discharging his duties in their entirety. He also supported President Grant in two notable

<sup>1</sup> For an extended account, see *Life of Roscoe Conkling*, by Alfred R. Conkling, pp. 463, 464.

instances when the President's wishes were defeated under circumstances that reflected no credit on his opponents. One was the nomination of E. Rockwood Hoar for associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. This was due to the Grant haters and Mr. Hoar's personal enemies. Senator Hamlin labored earnestly to induce the Senate to confirm Mr. Hoar, and regretted his defeat as a serious loss to the court. He likewise voted for the confirmation of Richard Henry Dana for United States minister to Great Britain. Mr. Dana's rejection was due chiefly to the machination of Ben Butler. Mr. Hamlin's position was misstated, and he was so indignant that he remarked in open Senate that the correspondent who misrepresented him ought to be excluded from the Senate.

Senator Hamlin thought at one time of retiring from public life at the end of this term, and he wrote some letters expressing his wish to be relieved from further service. The truth is there was no man in Congress more harried than he by requests for personal favors and the petitions of office-seekers. But he had a large personal following who believed that he should remain in the Senate, and they insisted on his reelection. While Mr. Hamlin was meditating, some newspapers made the mistake of attacking him in the desire of seeing him run off the track. The only excuse one newspaper could give for its opposition was its belief that Mr. Hamlin was "too old" for further service in the Senate, when he was sixty-six in years, and famous as a worker. This was a slight that stirred his fighting blood. "That man will feel old when my vote is counted," said he. The contest was child's play compared with the pitched battle of ante-bellum days and the election of 1869. He was returned by a vote of three to one. Only one incident need be related. A Portland editor opposed Mr. Hamlin for reasons not understood at the time. Afterwards it was learned that the editor had supposed that Mr. Hamlin prevented his appointment as a professor in a Maine college. But by the grim irony of fate it proved that the editor had supported and advocated the very man who had defeated his ambition. This comical turn of affairs closed the campaign and restored good feeling all around.



## CHAPTER XL

### LAST TERM IN THE SENATE

THE presidential election of 1876 was so closely contested that the result was long in doubt. The Republicans claimed that Hayes and Wheeler had 185 electoral votes, or a majority of one. This was contingent, however, on the result in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida, where the Ku-Klux had been rampant, and where dual canvassing boards disputed for supremacy. When Congress convened, the month after the election, there was a clamor to refer the controversy for settlement to an electoral commission to be created for that purpose. Senator Hamlin's position is now to be stated. He never questioned that, with their votes fairly counted, the Republicans had carried South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida. With the Ku-Klux outrages fresh in his mind, the claim that the Democracy had fairly carried these States was preposterous. A party that had planned the terrorization of its opponents in these and other States by means of murder, outrages, and social ostracism would hardly hesitate at a little thing like stuffing ballot-boxes or throwing out Republican votes. The assertion that there was an honest vote in the South was equaled only when Satan rebuked sin. The proposition to refer the election to a commission was, to Mr. Hamlin's mind, tantamount to an admission that there was a grave question as to the election of Hayes. Moreover, he regarded the commission as unconstitutional and a dangerous precedent. The time to correct faults in the election laws was not when the country was under excitement over a controverted election. This he had pointed out before, and, unshaken by popular clamor and party cowardice, he voted against the creation of the commission. He did not believe that there would be a revolution, with the law on the side of the right.

Rutherford B. Hayes became President, and signalized his entrance into office with an ill-fated attempt to reconcile the Southern Bourbon by surrendering to him all political power in the South. He withdrew national support from the Republican governments in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida, although in so doing he was charged with bargaining with the Bourbons, and also with reflecting on the legality of his title to office. In Louisiana, for example, Governor Packard received a larger vote than Mr. Hayes did. The moral issue

raised was that Mr. Hayes was not only dropping state governments whose existence was as legal as that of his administration, but that he was abandoning thousands of true Republican voters to the rule of the implacable Bourbon of the South. Moreover, Mr. Hayes's policy was a falsification of the declaration and acts of his party, and in opposition to the advice and wishes of its recognized leaders. It was often pointed out that Mr. Hayes would never have received the nomination for President could it have been known what he privately favored.

Senator Hamlin's relations with President Hayes may be briefly summarized. Some impertinent newspaper correspondents, to avenge themselves on Mr. Hamlin for his unwillingness to be "interviewed," manufactured stories to place him in an undignified light. One incident will tell the whole story. When Mr. Hayes began to receive Southern Bourbons at the White House, and turn the cold shoulder to his party, the Republican leaders in Congress appointed Senator Hamlin a member of a delegation to obtain from the President a personal explanation of his position. Mr. Hayes closed his glowing account of his policy by saying with emotional pleasure: "Gentleman, I expect as a result of my Southern policy that the Republican party will carry six or seven States at the next election." Hayes based his expectations on the soft words, wily promises, and adroit flattery of the Southern Bourbon. But Mr. Hamlin knew that picturesque anachronism. He had sat in the Senate with him before the war, and was sitting with him again. He heard him now clamoring for absolute power in the South, still praising the "lost cause," and yet drawing the nation's money. He knew that the Bourbon was not to be trusted, and he saw that political toleration in the South could not be effected until the Bourbon had passed away and a new generation had arisen. Only the strong right arm of the law could then safeguard Republicans in their rights at the South. Rising to his feet, Senator Hamlin said to Mr. Hayes sternly: "Mr. President, you will not carry a single school-district."

This was a severe but justified rebuke. The solid South was now possible, and Mr. Hamlin's prediction was verified to the letter. The solid South remained unbroken until a new generation that lived in the present came on the scene. The senator from South Carolina who said that "the South had loafed too long around the tombstone of Calhoun" expressed the right sentiment. Mr. Hayes made the mistake of disregarding the advice of those who knew men better than he did, and of trying to do what Grant had tried to do and failed. The government continued to acquiesce in its attitude in the rule of the shotgun and the tissue ballot at the South. One Southern vote was equal to two Northern votes, and eight years later the Democratic party was able to seize the presidency, and inaugurate un-American

doctrines which the people had to rue. Mr. Hamlin was probably more severe on this species of Northern flunkeyism than on Southern Bourbonism. A little something might be expected from the former type of man, but absolutely nothing from the latter. The Republican party refused to follow Mr. Hayes. He had no support in the Republican National Convention of 1880, although it sought for several days to select a candidate. But the revulsion of sentiment had set in long before this. The solid South, which fostered political intolerance, was confronted by a solid North, which allowed complete political toleration. In commenting on this change, Senator Hamlin humorously observed that he had never altered his position, and was yet regarded as a conservative by those who had formerly supported President Hayes.

Possibly there would have been no personal collision had President Hayes adhered to his professed principles of Civil Service Reform in appointing the collector of the port of Bangor. The people of that city, irrespective of party, petitioned President Hayes to continue E. T. Fox in that office, to which he had been promoted by President Grant, after a service of fourteen years as deputy collector, and, in brief, his continuance in office was demanded by the principles Mr. Hayes professed. President Hayes, indeed, admitted as much, and sent Mr. Fox's name to the Senate, but only to withdraw it, to the astonishment of Bangor. No charge was made against Mr. Fox; he was not a politician, in the usual sense of the word. It transpired that Mr. Hayes had been told that Mr. Fox was one of Senator Hamlin's personal friends. The informer was a man who, failing to obtain a nomination for Congress, had left the Republican party and was then coquetting for the Greenback nomination for governor. Mr. Hayes next nominated a man who had failed in business in Bangor, and was a clerk in Boston. Now Senator Hamlin had not up to this time concerned himself about Mr. Fox's appointment, because he naturally supposed that the President would respect the wishes of Bangor; but when war was declared, he accepted the issue. He simply asked the Senate to reject the nomination, and this was done by a unanimous vote. A third nomination was acceptable, and confirmed without dissent. After this exhibition of personal power in the Senate, Mr. Hayes left Mr. Hamlin alone.<sup>1</sup>

This renders it necessary to present Senator Hamlin's ideas of Civil Service Reform. He believed in applying business methods to the administration of public affairs; he did not believe in what was

<sup>1</sup> The *Boston Herald*, a supporter of the administration, said (March, 1879), "Mr. Hayes, in contemplating his defeat in the Senate Thursday by Mr. Hamlin, will not have the pleasant satisfaction of knowing that he had the right on his side, and stood by his principles."



termed "Snivel Service Reform." He entered into political life in the Jackson era, when the installation of a national administration was followed by wholesale removals from office, and when men surrounded themselves with their friends while in office. One cannot shake off the customs of a lifetime with ease, and Mr. Hamlin was in a measure wedded to the customs of his generation. Judge Henry Carter wrote of a conversation he once had with Senator George F. Hoar, who said to him: "It is said that Mr. Hamlin has secured the appointment of more men to office than any other man now in public life; but I will say that he always supports good men for office, never bad men." The evils of the patronage system and the pressure of the office-seekers convinced Mr. Hamlin, after his retirement, that good men should not be rotated out of subordinate positions solely for partisan purposes. He wrote Secretary McCulloch to that end when collector of Boston. In 1869, when returning to the Senate, he wrote his wife that the pressure on him from office-seekers was "simply awful," and he concluded that relief should be granted congressmen and the President; but this was a problem for the new generation to solve. He did not believe in a reform or methods that enabled a man to put his own friends in office under the plea of purifying the service, while he was using power to punish opponents. That was "Snivel Service Reform."

Probably the most important acts of Mr. Hamlin's latter-day term in the Senate were accomplished when he was chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. It is interesting to note that in every instance he supported the administration, against popular clamor, although he had no intercourse whatever with President Hayes. He was not in the habit of allowing personal grievances to influence his course as a senator. The first act by a curious coincidence involved the principle of arbitration. This was in 1878, when the United States and Great Britain sought to frame a treaty settling the interminable controversy over the North American fisheries. Senator Hamlin was deeply interested in this question, on which it was conceded he was an authority. He had never been satisfied with any adjustment that had been accomplished, and was greatly dissatisfied with the award of the Halifax Commission of 1878. The obvious interpretation of Blaine's diplomatic account of this episode is that the commission was packed by the appointment of a Belgian diplomat. The award was against the United States, by which England was to be paid \$5,500,000 for twelve years' use of Canadian waters by our fishermen. The American government in reply gave statistics showing that the in-shore Canadian fisheries would be worth about \$300,000, but Lord Salisbury declined to follow Secretary Evarts "into the details of the argument," and the affair was laid before the Senate.

When the award came within the jurisdiction of the Senate, popular opinion favored its rejection, and the speeches in Congress indicate that there was a strong opposition to its acceptance. The charge was made that Great Britain, to use a colloquialism, was now "getting square" with the United States for the Geneva award. The duty was devolved on Senator Hamlin, as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to give the affair its deciding direction. He was astounded at the decision, and in his report produced historical facts and figures to show that in 1854 the two governments offset the fisheries against each other under a treaty of twelve years' duration, that the American fishermen opposed its renewal, and that as late as 1873 Great Britain asked for another similar reciprocity treaty. He also demonstrated that the value of the American fisheries had been greatly underestimated, and that of the Canadian fisheries overestimated. He diplomatically criticised the award on other grounds, but counseled its acceptance in the interest of the principle of arbitration. His report was unique among senate and state documents. It consisted of only five pages of printed matter ; yet it was the result of months of labor and investigation. His ideas of the principal issues at stake, and the compact style of his reasoning, may be gathered from the following passages :—

"The principle of international arbitration, so successfully inaugurated under the provisions of the treaty of Washington, is of such vast importance to the peace and prosperity of the nations and the consequent advancement of civilization, that every proper effort, and indeed every remarkable and honorable sacrifice, necessary to secure and maintain it, should be freely and gladly made. If comments, therefore, become necessary in regard to the award of the Halifax Commission, they will be indulged not as of interest simply to the American side of the question, but of equal interest at least to the British side of the question. In a just and proper disposition of this question the interests of the two nations do not and cannot differ.

"Boards of arbitration, like judicial courts, are restricted in their judgments and awards by the jurisdiction that is conferred upon them. If an international board of arbitration transcends its jurisdiction, and proceeds, in any respect, *ultra vires*, there is, of course, no appeal to interpose as a corrective, except to that of the justice and honor of the nations interested. However much, then, we may regard the award made at Halifax as excessively exorbitant, and possibly beyond the legal and proper power of those making it, your committee would not recommend that the government of the United States disregard it, if the government of her Britannic Majesty, after a full view of the facts and circumstances of the case, should conclude and declare the award to be lawfully and honorably due. If the unfailing power of self-interest may be feared as a force tending to obscure the view of the British government as to the essential justice of the oppos-

ing side, we must remember that in the other direction no nation is more vitally interested than Great Britain in upholding and maintaining the principle and practice of international arbitration; and the intelligence and virtue of the British statesman cannot fail to suggest that arbitration can only be retained as a fixed mode of adjusting international disputes by demonstrating its efficiency as a method of securing mutual justice, and thus assuring that mutual content, without which awards and verdicts are powerful only for mischief. In the spirit of these suggestions your committee beg leave to call attention to several features of the claim. . . . In the judgment of your committee it would not be wise or expedient for the United States to refuse to pay the award on this ground, if the British government, after the subject shall have been brought to its attention, claim that in its judgment the award is made in accordance with the terms of the treaty and in conformity with sound principles of law."

The last important speech which Mr. Hamlin delivered in the Senate was in February, 1879, on the ill-advised movement to modify the Burlingame treaty with China without observing the proper methods of procedure. The influx of Chinese on the Pacific slope had brought certain evils, which were admitted; but there was a strong difference of opinion among honest men as to the requirements of the hour and the duty of the government. A demagogic movement originated in the sand lots of San Francisco to terminate the clauses of the Burlingame treaty that permitted Chinese immigration, and this became a hot political issue. Both parties were too anxious to curry favor with the labor element, and the House, under political pressure, rushed a bill through to repeal the immigration clause of the treaty without dealing with the Chinese government in an honorable manner. To the credit of President Hayes it is to be said that he resisted this move, and eventually vetoed the bill. Senator Hamlin stood by the administration, and as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations made the principal speech against this proposed breach of the nation's plighted faith. But he was in the minority, and yet it was said that his speech embodied the second sober thought of the country, and strengthened the position of the administration. This speech gives Mr. Hamlin's ideas of national honor, and the duty of this republic to the oppressed of the Old World. It was the old Jeffersonian Democrat who spoke this time. Only a brief outline is possible.

"I am a political partisan," he declared in opening his remarks, "and have little respect for him who is not." But he would redress the injury any citizen might receive, and would do it "decently and in order." Only one speech had been made on human liberty and the rights of man in the discussion of the question, and while these had been called "glittering generalities," he thought that they were



deeply imbedded in the foundations of the government. "I am only going to enter my solemn protest against this kind of legislation that caters to your Dennis Kearneys and to your unnaturalized Englishmen, and is only a counterpart of that wild craze which ran over this land known as native Americanism—little better than that. Inaugurate it now, and where will it end? Shall it apply to the lazzaroni that swarm on the coast of the Mediterranean, and shall they be excluded from our country and our government? Shall it next enter the theological arena, and shall the Catholic be told that he shall not come here to breathe the free air of this republic? I have my convictions upon this question, and they are deep in my heart. I love my country, and I would keep it at least like the motto inscribed upon the banner of the unstained knight, 'Without fear and without reproach.' We are hurrying on now to do an act at which I fear in after time the men who do it will blush."

With some feeling Senator Hamlin referred to the oldtime, proud American creed, that this republic was "the home of the free," "where the outcast of every nation, where the child of every creed and of every clime, could breathe our free air and participate in our free institutions." Upon this doctrine, those who opposed the passage of the bill as a restriction and a limitation on immigration took their stand. This question had resolved itself into two simple propositions, the one of power and the other of principle. There was no difference of opinion as to power to abrogate a treaty when it was justified, but "what we should do, and the rule by which we should be guided, is the rule of right, not of power."

"'Oh, it is excellent

To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous

To use it like a giant.'

We negotiated a treaty with a friendly and a foreign power. We in connection with other governments forced that treaty upon that power. It is as patent and as true as anything, it is as certain as mathematics, that in securing that treaty there was no section of our country so earnest, so forward, as that which lies on the Pacific slope. . . . We accomplished the negotiations of a treaty which secured to us right of trial by jury of our own citizens, which opened up a number of ports, . . . and we granted in return the immigration of Chinese subjects to this country. Why, sir, who does not remember with what welcome, with what rejoicing, that treaty was hailed upon the Pacific coast!"

Senator Hamlin referred to the evils it was alleged the government should correct, and said that if Chinese immigration had produced any, he was willing to take action; indeed, he announced that it was he who drew up the resolutions, offered a year ago, suggesting modi-

fications in the immigration clause of the treaty, and calling the President's attention to the subject. He also said that he could assert advisedly that the President would consider the matter, and he added that he would leave it to the executive in the firm belief that the question would be satisfactorily solved to all parties. But he was "not willing to apply that rule of might which subverts the principle of right. . . . We are asked to secure a modification of the treaty thus negotiated, which allows an unlimited immigration from the Chinese empire to this country. That is the precise question, and it is sought in direct contravention of the fifth article of the treaty to limit that immigration. . . . I would proceed by the ordinary rules of negotiation; I would treat that empire as I would treat every civilized nation upon the earth, and I believe there are few senators on this floor who would be willing to treat a warlike power of Europe in the summary manner in which this bill proposes to treat the empire of China. I would first make the distinct proposition to treat. Failing to treat, . . . after full and ample notice, I would say then that we might take the matter into our own consideration, and apply the remedy which in our judgment should be demanded."

Mr. Hamlin discussed precedents that should govern the course of Congress. He cited the refusal of the United States to allow Great Britain to interpolate in the extradition treaty of 1842 words which would exonerate it from surrendering fugitives from this country to its own. Secretary Fish declared that the United States would recognize no power to alter, or attach, a condition to an existing treaty without its previous consent. Another precedent, equally pertinent, was when Congress accepted the Halifax award, and passed a resolution saying that the objectionable clause in the treaty ought to be terminated at the earliest possible period consistent with the articles governing its adoption by both nations. The resolution did not seek to abrogate the treaty, but pointed out how it should be done and the methods of negotiation to be pursued. "These are the precedents to which I refer, and they ought to guide us in the case before us. We may have the power, and we may say that we will violate the article of the treaty with China, . . . but when we have done that we shall bring, in all human probabilities, reprisals from that government upon us. John Chinaman is no fool, and I think that the whole thing here is illustrated by Bret Harte's poem. . . . The emperor of China has done his duty more fully than we have done ours. He has complied with every term and letter of the articles of the treaty. We have not."

Mr. Hamlin proceeded to question the expediency of shutting out the Chinese on industrial grounds. He produced convincing statistics to prove that Chinese labor had advanced California a century

beyond the stage she would have reached in the same time without it. He cited the evidence of "the intelligent, the cool, the deliberate" as to the value and desirability of the Chinese immigrant, and gave it his opinion that the Chinese would make good citizens and assimilate within a reasonable time. He scouted the cry of cheap Chinese labor, and condemned it as he did the cry against labor-saving machinery, which he regarded as temporary in its effect on the laborer, and marking a readjustment of industrial conditions and an upliftment of the toiling masses. He expressed his belief in the capacity of this continent to absorb and assimilate the immigrant from the Old World. "Be he pagan or be he Hottentot, let us receive him within the arms of a Christian civilization, . . . the civilization of Christ, and if we cannot overcome paganism, or any other ism, . . . if we cannot overcome their system of government, their system of prejudice or religion, . . . then it will be time to tell me that they shall not come here; and when I see that this labor produces wealth that otherwise would not have been produced, and that through an inequality which can but be brief, I have no fear of 'cheap Chinese labor.'"

He closed, saying: "I see, Mr. President, a mighty country, an empire upon the Pacific; I look at its vast resources of soil, of forest, of mine, of water that rolls its way to its own vast ocean home, unvexed by the utilizing hand of man. I want no vision to tell me what shall be that empire of commerce, of arts, and of agriculture that in the future shall arise on that coast. I look beyond, and I see the mighty commerce that shall come from India to us if we are wise, 'if we do not do that which will compel the emperor of China to retaliate upon us and to make reprisals.' Who believes that if we to-day shall determine that but fifteen Chinamen shall come to this country in each vessel from the empire of China, he will not say but fifteen barrels of that flour which goes in uncounted thousands from California shall be the limit that shall be taken upon any vessel that traverses the Pacific to China? Who does not believe that if we place unnecessary and harassing restrictions upon the Chinese government, if we violate our plighted faith and national honor to them, they will not feel exonerated, and retaliate on us? Oh, I cannot bear to see a stop put to the untold millions of commerce that shall roll to our shores; I cannot bear to see that uncounted commerce that shall go from us to them interfered with. . . . I shall vote against the measure, and I leave that vote the last legacy to my children, that they may esteem it the brightest act of my life."

The effort to override the President's veto failed, and subsequently the necessary modifications in the treaty and restriction of immigration were accomplished "decently and in order," by a commission appointed for that purpose, without giving the offense which the hasty



and partisan method of procedure originally outlined must have given. The official friendship of China was therefore retained, and the United States continued its commercial relations with the Oriental people to the advantage of both. When the question of Chinese immigration had been freed from political entanglements, prejudice began to die out somewhat, and the Mongolian proved that he was patient, hard-working, grateful for kindness, and more amenable to the civilization of the New World than had been originally supposed. The United States can justly claim some share in the recent awakening of the Oriental empire, and with the political schemes of individuals now forgotten there is no difference of opinion as to the duty of our government when Senator Hamlin pleaded that it should keep its plighted word. A pleasant incident was a call the Chinese minister at Madrid made on Mr. Hamlin when he was minister to Spain, to thank him for his speech, and inform him of the gratitude he had inspired in the Chinese government.

This speech remains as Mr. Hamlin's valedictory address in the Senate, although it is hardly probable that he intended it as such. Yet it was the last lengthy and formal effort he made, and thereafter, until the end of his term, he said but little in debate, and devoted himself to the duties close at hand. The reason he had for withdrawing himself from active participation in discussion, aside from purely personal considerations, was the familiar one,—the unremitting call on him from the plain people. This is a subject by itself, and only a passing reference can be made. In the words of another writer: "Though he was blood and iron in make-up, yet he was the gentlest and most patient of men, and accessible to every creature who would speak to him. In solidity and dignity of form and carriage, in simplicity of manner, and in sincerity of purpose, I think it will grow on the minds of those who knew him well that he has been rarely surpassed, the country through, in the things that go to the making up of an all-round citizen and statesman. . . . He not only believed in his friends, and trusted them, but he also felt it a duty to help any one who needed and expected help from him. . . . He did more kindly and serviceable things for the great public during his long residence in Washington than any other public man did."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hamlin's correspondence in itself tells the story of his nature. There were letters from Benton, Webster, Everett, Lincoln, Seward, Sumner, Stanton, Chase, Chandler, of his earlier contemporaries; letters from Grant, Greeley, Blaine, Conkling, Garfield, and McKinley, of the successive generation of leaders; letters from David Dudley Field, Cyrus W. Field, James Watson Webb, Francis Lieber, John

<sup>1</sup> "An Old-Fashioned Statesman," by Enoch Knight, *Overland Monthly*, November, 1891.

G. Palfrey, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, Bayard Taylor, Joseph Henry, Charles Levi Woodbury, John A. Dix, Charles Wylls Elliott, John Neal, Neal Dow, Christopher Robert, and many other distinguished men, who wrote him on questions of the day, politics, education, science, to get his advice or help. But what is more to the purpose, the greater bulk of his correspondence was with the plain multitude, who looked to him for help. "If there were tangles in a worthy pension case, he patiently investigated it, and if possible helped it along. If a widow's son were inveigled into the army under age and against his family's wishes, Mr. Hamlin was the man first applied to for help. He not only never shirked a responsibility, but he did all things demanded or expected of him in the line of duty or of kindness." This is the story his letters tell—and mostly of the pathetic side of life. There were thousands and thousands of them, and they were all read, filed away, and marked "answered" or "not answered." They came from all States. He knew no state lines when his help was asked in a worthy cause.

Perhaps the nature of the appeals made to Senator Hamlin, and the spirit in which they were written, can be best gathered from the following letter, sent him when he was Vice-President, from a poor postmaster in Maine:—

"MY DEAR AND EVER ABIDING FRIEND, — Our friendship lasted for a third of a century. How unexpected it may be to you, this is probably the last communication I shall have to write you on this earth. I can say truly, as I come down to the close of life, that it gives me much pleasure to know that I have one friend who has always been faithful and true. This fact is one of the pleasantest remembrances of my life.

"I am now lying on my deathbed, and have one more request to ask, and which will probably be the last I shall ever ask of you. I have had a great many long and severe sicknesses which have left me in embarrassed circumstances. I wish you to use your influence with the Postmaster-General to have him permit me to run a substitute until my term expires. I have three small children who are unable to earn their support, and who will be left in destitute circumstances, and if permission will be granted to the above it will give them two or three hundred dollars for their maintenance until homes can be procured for them. I am unable to write more."

This postscript was added by another hand:—

"Postmaster — died to-day." His last thoughts were on Mr. Hamlin.

But this exhausting service and the burdensome pressure of the office-seekers wore Mr. Hamlin out, and was the principal cause of his desire to retire into private life. He had other reasons also. He

thought that it was the more graceful part for one to withdraw from public office of his own accord, for which reason he especially admired Washington.<sup>1</sup> He also said that no public servant should allow himself to be deprived of the enjoyment of the evening of his old age at his own fireside. He had announced after his reelection in 1875 that it was for the last time, but once more his old friends prepared to return him, whether he would or not, and he felt compelled to give public notice of his intention to retire. This he announced in 1878 before the Republican state convention, saying that he believed the time had come when a younger man should take his place. There were cries of "No," "Not yet," but he repeated his intention, and could not be shaken from it. At the same time, speaking of the dishonest greenback craze, he uttered his well remembered sentiments about the policy of honesty. "There is an old maxim that honesty is the best policy. I do not believe in putting honesty on that ground. Do *right*, and honesty is the only thing to do. I want honesty without policy. I want honesty without qualification. I want every man to discharge his obligations morally, politically, and socially, not because it is policy, but because it is right and honest. I hate the word policy; it is an equivalent for the betrayal of principle."

The last three years Mr. Hamlin spent in the Senate were perhaps the pleasantest of his connection with that body. He was freed from personal political cares, the President ultimately relinquished an impracticable policy and became more in harmony with his party, and the membership of the Senate was never more congenial to the veteran statesman. The death of Chandler and the retirement of Howe and Cameron left him the sole survivor of that picturesque anti-slavery senatorial guard still on duty. Two other groups of leaders were represented in the Senate. One included Blaine, Conkling, Thurman, Edmunds, Morrill, Sherman, Windom, Logan, Kirkwood, and others, and the second was composed of men who succeeded to leadership, and realized the expectations of their elder contemporary, — George F. Hoar, Henry L. Dawes, William B. Allison, Preston B. Plumb, Stanley Matthews, and others, such as Orville H. Platt, David Davis, James B. Beck, William W. Eaton, E. H. Rollins, John R. McPherson, A. H. Garland, William Pinkney White, Isham G. Harris, Francis J. Kernan, who lent strength to the Senate and their respective parties. Mr. Hamlin was especially congenial with Hoar and Dawes, and also Eaton, the "jolly little Democrat from Connecticut." In the House Garfield, McKinley, and Reed were forging to the front. Mr. Hamlin jocosely spoke of each of these as "one of his young men."

<sup>1</sup> Thomas B. Reed said: "At no time during his long and varied career could he have laid down so much power as when at the age of seventy-two he voluntarily left the Senate of the United States."



In point of service Mr. Hamlin was now the father of the Senate, and he was the recipient of those favors and honors the Senate gracefully bestows on the chosen few. Once he forgot that he had paired with Newton Booth, of California, and paired with another senator. The next morning he arose and made his apology to Mr. Booth, who neatly accepted it by saying that the Senate was of the opinion that its Nestor was privileged to pair with any two members of its body. Another personal glimpse was given in connection with the Conkling-Gordon affair. "There was another notable incident this session when Mr. Hamlin, the senior of the Senate, — we believe that he was senator thirty years ago this year, — arose, and in grave words stated the position and duties of those who assumed to make public the doings of the Senate in respect to a personal difficulty which had recently arisen in debate. The dignity and weight of the senator's remarks on this occasion made it plain why he has consolidated the influence which his fellow-senators have long accorded him, although one of their number not conspicuous nor frequent in debate. We know no man in the long list of eminent persons who have sat in the Senate for the ninety years since the government began, who could have better filled the foremost place in a scene of this dignified and affecting nature than did the senator from Maine on the occasion referred to." <sup>1</sup>

When it came time for Mr. Hamlin to leave the Senate, his departure was the subject of widespread comment. The story of his life was told again in the newspapers to the rising generation, and friends and honorable opponents seemed to vie in acknowledging the veteran's services, and in wishing him a green and happy old age. The "Chicago Inter-Ocean" announced that there was "more regret over the approaching retirement of Senator Hamlin than had been heard for many years," and commented editorially: "He leaves voluntarily. His State would gladly keep him in the seat he has filled so long and so ably, but he retires to make room for one of another generation. Mr. Hamlin has been the patriarch of the Senate; his ability, his experience, his integrity, his wisdom, his candor, his courage, and his zeal have fitted him for the place that Nestor filled in the armies of Agamemnon. No man in the list of honorable and able men has received, or has deserved, a higher respect from his colleagues and from his country than Hannibal Hamlin. His life has been a noble and a useful one, and no man has ever retired from a public career with less to regret or more to be proud of." The "Boston Advertiser" said that no one should forget the retirement of the "Father of the Senate," and that "his sound common sense and unassailable integrity have caused him to be respected and honored both in the

<sup>1</sup> The *New York Stockholder*, January, 1878.

Senate and by all throughout the country who have watched his course." The "New York Herald:" "He has had perhaps more influence upon legislation than any other half dozen of the more ostentatious men around him." Those were typical expressions.

Senator Hamlin was quietly urged to take a formal farewell from the scene of his long labors, but he said with a quiet smile, "No, I should have to talk about myself," and so went on until his work was stopped of itself. He wrote his son, General Hamlin:—

"I am sitting for the last day in the Senate, and, my son, I am a happy man. You and others may not comprehend it, but I feel it, and in the language of the sacred poet, I may say:—

‘This is the day I long have sought.’"

Thurman sat down by Mr. Hamlin's side, and asked: "Well, my dear old friend, how do you feel?" Mr. Hamlin handed him this letter. Thurman took his friend's pen, and wrote on another sheet in the same letter:—

"MY DEAR MR. HAMLIN,—I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, but I have known your father for over thirty-five years. Like him, this is the last day of my political life, and I am rejoiced to go out of it in such good company and with my personal friend of a generation. My sincere wish is that you may do honor to a father so illustrious."

A comment on this incident was, "The old Carthaginian and the old Roman returned to the people with a simplicity true to their natures."

Mr. Hamlin's friends did not allow him to retire without a formal recognition of the occasion. The Maine Republican Association of Washington, which included several prominent residents of the capital, tendered him a reception and gave him a handsome clock set and an address in a bound volume, subscribed by William B. Snell, President of the association; General Ellis Spear, the vice-president; Benjamin Freeman, treasurer; B. T. Hanley, secretary; John W. Babson, corresponding secretary; and one hundred and forty others.

In his speech Judge Snell said: "While your fame stands upon a broad and solid base, your name is sacredly and inseparably associated with that of President Lincoln; so that Lincoln and Hamlin will be cherished in patriotic hearts and descend to posterity among the 'few illustrious names that were not born to die.'" The address recounted the main points of his life, and said: "Honors higher than those of office follow in your retirement. The warm regard of friends, the respect of all, and the proud record for all time—of nearly half a century of honest, active, fearless, and conspicuous public life, untouched by calumny, unmarred by a spot."



SENATOR HAMLIN, 1876.





In his response Mr. Hamlin said : " In the twilight of age, as it shall gather more and more around me, and as I note the flight of time on yonder dial, it will be an unmingled and unalloyed pleasure to me to know that I have enjoyed the confidence and respect which your memorials and address would seem to indicate ; and when that dark cloud that lies beyond the twilight of years shall envelope me in its folds, your memorials will be transmitted to my children, and by them to their children, to be cherished equally as an expression of your generous friendship, as a testimonial of my public services."

When Mr. Hamlin returned home, the citizens of Bangor, irrespective of party, welcomed him back with a reception which is unique in the annals of that city. The reception committee was composed of former mayors, — Charles Hayward, Hollis Bowman, S. D. Thurston, J. S. Wheelwright, J. P. Bass, Newell Blake, F. M. Laughton, W. B. Hayford, and A. C. Hamlin. The addresses were made by Chief Justice Appleton, Mayor William H. Brown, ex-Mayors S. F. Humphrey and Wheelwright, Hon. Abram Sanborn, the Rev. Dr. George W. Field, and the Rev. F. T. Hazelwood. Judge Appleton dwelt on the length of Mr. Hamlin's term of public service, which was greater than that of any other man, unless it was that of Nathaniel Macon, of North Carolina. As a senator Mr. Hamlin commanded the esteem and confidence of his associates, no matter how diverse or opposed were their views on the political questions agitating the country. There was no member of that august body whose judgments were more respected, or on whose opinions more reliance was placed. His influence was the influence which good sense, undoubted integrity, and great experience in public affairs will and should ever command. In the darkest hours of the rebellion he never doubted the result. After mingling for more than a third of a century in the conflict of party strife, he returned to the people without a stain on his garments. In his brief reply, Mr. Hamlin said that he had endeavored to hold the demands of the humblest when he thought they were right, and in such cases had known neither party nor religion. " A greeting like this from my neighbors, where I have passed my manhood is dearer to me than anything else."

The congratulatory letters and telegrams sent by men of national prominence and of both parties were a noteworthy incident of this reception.

Justin S. Morrill, who succeeded Mr. Hamlin as the father of the Senate, wrote : " No man in the nation has rendered longer or better public services, or is more worthy of the distinction you are conferring than Hannibal Hamlin, and I tender the congratulations of a lifelong and unbroken friendship."

Secretary Blaine : " Convey to your eminent and venerable guest

the sincerest expression of my admiration for him as a statesman and my earnest affection for him as a friend."

Senator Conkling: "With warm regard and respect for Governor Hamlin, I send greeting, and would I could add to the honors all pay him."

Senator Anthony: "I desire to participate in the honor to your distinguished fellow-citizen, one of the best men that I ever served with in the Senate, a man endowed with the instincts of patriotism and the genius of common sense."

Senator Windom: "Minnesota joins Maine in honors to the noble patriot and statesman, — Hannibal Hamlin. He retires from public service crowned with the love of all his associates and the gratitude of the nation."

Robert T. Lincoln: "I desire to join in the good wishes for his continued health and happiness which will be received by Mr. Hamlin to-night."

Senator Hale (Mr. Hamlin's successor): "I am glad Bangor gives fitting reception to her distinguished citizen, whose career has honored his home, his State, and the nation. I am sure he will find there affection and welcome. He leaves here a bright, unsullied record, which his successor will do well to imitate."

Senator Frye: "Public receptions cannot add to the honors won by the ability, integrity, and spotless life of Mr. Hamlin, but may illustrate the love and esteem of his neighbors. In this good office I join with all my heart."

Robert G. Ingersoll: "I want to say one word for your great townsman. No man ever left the Senate carrying with him more genuine respect than Hannibal Hamlin. He is a true Republican king, crowned with nearly half a century of public service, and he has earned the right to enjoy with those he loves the serene twilight of a great and useful life."

Senators George H. Pendleton, H. G. Davis, Joseph E. Brown, John R. McPherson, Thomas F. Bayard, M. W. Ransom, Isham G. Harris, Eli Saulsbury, Daniel W. Voorhees, and B. H. Hill united in the following letter to ex-Mayor Laughton, a Democrat: "The undersigned, associates of Mr. Hamlin in the Senate, desire through you to tender him their kind regards and best wishes on the occasion of his reception this evening, and to join with the people of Maine in congratulating him on the esteem and affection which he carries with him into private life after a long public career. His political opponents take great pleasure in thus bearing testimony to his unquestioned purity and his devotion to public duty."

Senator Bayard added independently: "Although his political opponent, I would gladly join the people of Maine in their tribute of



respect to Hannibal Hamlin, for he has served faithfully and well, with honor to himself and benefit to the country. May he live long to enjoy the just meed of an honest life."

A tribute of special interest was from Professor Samuel Harris, a lifelong friend and a neighbor, once a member of the faculty of the Bangor Theological Seminary, afterwards president of Bowdoin College, and subsequently an eminent and beloved professor of the Yale Divinity School.

"It would be a great gratification to me to unite with the citizens of Bangor in offering my respects to the ex-senator. He is entitled to honor from all good citizens for his faithfulness and assiduity in the public service during an exceptionally long period of years; for his incorruptible and stainless integrity; for his uniform and consistent opposition from the beginning of his congressional career to the encroachments of the slave power; for his hearty, vigorous, and effective labors in support of the Constitution and Union during the civil war; for his interest and efforts for the emancipation of the slaves and their protection in their just rights; for his steadfast upholding of the faith and honor of the government in the payment of the national debt; for his support of financial principles which the history of the world has demonstrated to be sound, against the widespread advocacy, by ill-informed men, of the theories which the history of the world has over and over demonstrated to be false, impracticable, and ruinous; and for his honorable discharge of the duties of the office of Vice-President of the United States. What a deliverance it would have been to the nation if he had been elected with Lincoln for a second term."

Nearly two decades after Mr. Hamlin left the Senate, the following pen portrait was sketched as he appeared in retrospect, by George F. Hoar, for these pages:—

"When I came into the Senate, Mr. Hamlin was one of the oldest members in service as well as in age. I was never very intimate with him. He disliked very much my opinions about Civil Service Reform, and he disliked very much the administration of President Hayes, of which I was an earnest supporter. But our personal relations were exceedingly agreeable. I used to talk with him a great deal in leisure moments. He was admirable company. He would bring out from the stores of a most retentive memory stories of a public life, in which he had well known Webster, Clay, Calhoun, and other great men of a departed generation. He had a gift of spirited and racy narrative. He was very skillful at portraiture of the characters whom he had known. If his stories could be recorded as he gave them, they would make an admirable contribution to historic and biographical literature.

"He was a sturdy, rugged character, like an old gnarled oak, inflexibly honest, absolutely fearless, always ready to do battle in any cause he deemed just and righteous, a lover of liberty, wise, understanding thoroughly the mechanism of our government, trusting the people, loving his country, and loving his State. He had little respect for what has been called sentimental politics, — did not care about hearing fine, eloquent speeches, fine phrases, or glittering generalities, but had a heart easily moved, and eyes easily moistened by any tale of human suffering or of patriotic daring or self-sacrifice. He was very simple in his manner, behavior, traits, and style of living. He thought the best government, both for efficiency and honesty, was to have all public offices filled by the men who were active and efficient in support of the political policies of the prevailing party, and to have the party in power responsible for these officials, from the President down. So he resigned the valuable office of collector of the port of Boston when President Johnson abandoned the principles and policies of the Republican party.

"Mr. Hamlin was, I think, the most influential man in the Senate when I entered it, and until he left it. He was an extreme Republican. He was an old anti-slavery man. But he was a great favorite with Southerners and the Democrats. He was a stanch friend of Mr. Blaine, standing by him always in public and private; still, somehow, he could manage Conkling when nobody else could move him.

"He had a gift of vigorous, racy, and pithy speech, penetrating at once to the heart of all argument, rejecting everything that was superfluous or irrelevant, and calculated to persuade any American audience, whether it were the Senate dealing with some great questions of state, or a company of farmers gathered in a school-district in a backwoods town. The first time I heard him or saw him was in Worcester during the Fremont campaign. I remember very well the great impression he made on the audience. 'They tell us,' he said, 'that Fremont has no antecedents. That is true. He is an antecedent himself.' I suspect that a good many of Mr. Hamlin's casual utterances in familiar speech became the proverbs of his political associates.

"I said that I was never personally very intimate with him, and that he did not like my opinions about the Hayes administration, or my opinions about Civil Service Reform. But I owe to his kindness one of the principal honors of my public life. So I have good right to claim that he was my friend, and I am bound to cherish his memory with affection and gratitude."

## CHAPTER XLI

### MINISTER TO SPAIN

MR. HAMLIN did not remain in retirement long, and the reason is probably to be found in the part he played in the Republican National Convention of 1880. This was the year when the followers of Grant sought to make him President for a third term. It was practically unprecedented, although there had been tentative talk in favor of retaining Washington, Jefferson, and Jackson in the presidency for another four years. In this instance anomalous circumstances existed, and the temptation that beset the Republican party was too strong for a considerable portion of its following to resist. They were known as Stalwarts, although there were many opposed to Grant who had the same right to be known as Republicans of this kind. The South was still solid, and suffrage within that section was a mockery to Republicans, while Southern Democrats were free to speak throughout the North without fear of life or limb. By mutual consent the Republican party had rejected President Hayes's policy, and there was a general call for a President who would protect the rights and the lives of Southern Republicans, if need be. To many Grant seemed to be the man. There were thousands of Southern men, including Confederate soldiers, who were ashamed and disgusted at the sullen and intolerant attitude of their leaders and their inability to rise to the magnanimity of the North. They believed in Grant; and now that the great soldier had been received by foreign nations as the first citizen of this republic, and had been welcomed home with demonstrations the like of which had never been seen before, it was believed that if Grant should run for the presidency again he would break the solid South. Thus the third term movement was originated, and gained a headway that threatened to sweep all before it.

Under the circumstances Blaine's candidacy had the merit of altruism, and in all time to come his fair critics must concede this. If he had thrown his influence to Grant, in all human probabilities Grant would have been President once more. Those who were behind the scenes among Blaine's friends, at the time when the country was in a furore over the return of the silent soldier, well remember how hopeless Blaine's chances seemed, and how the circumstance aroused



Blaine to greater effort "to beat the third term idea," though he himself might fail of the nomination. Blaine's vigorous opposition to the despotic "unit rule" was another thing that helped bring the Grant tide to a standstill, and had far-reaching results, though at a cost to himself in the end. He made a masterful and superb fight against a dangerous innovation when the odds were against him, and when he clearly saw the risk he was running of earning the implacable opposition of the Stalwart faction in certain of the larger States. The high-handed outrages of the Republican ringleaders in New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania could only presage party demoralization and ultimate defeat. There had never been such a bitter or closely divided fight in the Republican party. The beneficial outcome was the death of the third term, and this is due to James G. Blaine. Compared with the Grant movement of 1880, the feeble demonstration for Cleveland in 1896 was like the peep of the penny whistle as against the roar of a Krupp battery.

Had there been no third term movement, Mr. Hamlin would not have left his home to attend the Republican National Convention. He believed that he had earned the right of retirement, and that young men should take the leadership of the party. But the third term craze disturbed him. It was contrary to the unwritten constitution, and was the longest step ever taken toward one-man power in this republic. It was one of the proud and enduring tests of American institutions that the people could every four years raise a new man to the presidency without a jar to the government. To say that the future of the country rested on any one man was to belittle Republican institutions. But while Mr. Hamlin had no intention of taking an active part in the convention, Mr. Blaine wished differently. In 1876 Mr. Hamlin was at Cincinnati when Hayes was nominated, though only as a spectator. On returning to Washington in a state of regret and displeasure, he said bluntly: "Blaine, if you had put your campaign in my hands, you would have been nominated." This was a private expression, and was not intended for other ears. When Mr. Hamlin pointed out to Mr. Blaine how his canvass should have been conducted, the latter made a mental note for the future. In 1880, remembering this, he wrote the following letter, which gives an idea of his belief in Mr. Hamlin's political ability:—

SENATE CHAMBER, WASHINGTON, May 22, 1880.

DEAR SIR, — I hear with concern that you are not going to Chicago. I dislike to ask any service of friendship that may subject you to personal inconvenience, but I fear your absence will be purposely misconstrued by my opponents, and to my injury. You will find good accommodations engaged for you at the Grand Pacific, and I shall

be much pleased to have you go as my personal representative, and I will in any and every event ratify and confirm any and every agreement or arrangement which in your wise discretion you may see fit to make.

I hope this letter will find you still at home, and that you will go out in the special car with the "boys."

Sincerely,

J. G. BLAINE.

HON. H. HAMLIN, Bangor.

Thus Mr. Hamlin assumed charge of the Blaine forces, and this was his last important political battle. Several picturesque descriptions of his work in this convention have been published. One writer said: "His long experience in the arena of politics, his knowledge of party tactics and methods of management, together with his position as Nestor of the Senate, makes him an important factor in the fight. . . . He has controlled the battery end of wires that galvanize into acting for Blaine a great number of delegates who came here uninstructed. . . . He is the only representative of the Lincoln administration that has come down to the Lake City this year, and he is looked upon by a vast number with a reverence approaching veneration. Colored delegates from the South go to him for advice, and accept his word of counsel as implicitly as if he were the medium through which the spirit of the grand old war President communicated with this world of flesh and blood."<sup>1</sup> The rest of the story was briefly told by Joseph H. Manley, for many years Mr. Blaine's confidential friend. "We soon learned," said he, "that the Grant men would stick together, and Blaine was beaten. He knew it too, and the question was how to hold the Blaine men together until the right moment. The two great powers in the convention were Roscoe Conkling and Hannibal Hamlin. The former appeared in the public mind to dominate, but Senator Hamlin was the greater power. He more than any other man controlled the opposition to Grant, and in the end contributed more than any one else to defeating the third term and nominating Garfield."

Perhaps if Mr. Hamlin had had his choice he would have selected Windom as the compromise candidate. He was a man who met the requirements for the presidency, as outlined by Benton in his interesting letter in a preceding chapter, and which met Mr. Hamlin's views. Windom had the genius of common sense, firmness, experience, and a personality that inspired both confidence and liking. It was a curious fact that he was born in Virginia and brought up in Ohio. But the circumstances of the hour compelled the nomination of Garfield. His magnificent personality, splendid record, and great abilities naturally suggested him as the right man, and though true

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Herald*, June 6, 1880.

to his word, he was swept into power by an irresistible movement. Mr. Hamlin had perceived how events were shaping themselves, and Mr. Manley recalled that at the critical moment he directed the Maine delegation to break for Garfield. Mr. Hamlin knew Garfield well, and was exceedingly fond of him. He ranked him as a great man, but sometimes expressed his private fears less Garfield's lovable nature—his great amiability and desire to please all—might prove a source of weakness to him in the presidency. Garfield, like McKinley and other younger men who came into leadership after Mr. Hamlin was out of power, made his acquaintance in Congress and established an intimacy on the stump. Garfield always visited Mr. Hamlin's home when in Maine.

Here is a letter Garfield wrote Mr. Hamlin when he was in Maine, during the presidential campaign of 1876, which reveals his enthusiastic nature and spontaneous way of acting:—

HOULTON, MAINE, September 10, 1876.

DEAR SENATOR, — I have had four very enthusiastic meetings in Aroostook, and I think there will be a full vote to-morrow. I am very glad I stayed over and spoke at Houlton; for it would have been a serious thing to have disappointed the people in this vicinity. It was really surprising to see what enthusiasm the people here exhibit in reference to Powers.<sup>1</sup> The abuse he has received will help him in the long run. He is a live man and a noble fellow. I will drop you this note as I pass through your city to-morrow, to let you know how your Aroostook province is behaving. And I hope to hear from you at Bangor, that you will go to Ohio and aid us in our fight.

I am, very truly yours,

J. A. GARFIELD.

HON. HANNIBAL HAMLIN, Bangor, Maine.

After the election of Garfield and Arthur, Mr. Blaine wrote Mr. Hamlin, on January 24, 1881:—

"The time is approaching when I am compelled to give Garfield a final answer in regard to going into the Cabinet. Up to this time the talk has been confined to the newspapers. I have said nothing myself, except in the way of gratification or partial contradiction when asked. But by the first of February I am under obligations to give Garfield an answer of 'Yes' or 'No.' My mind veers first one way and then the other, and I really am much troubled about it. I want to confer with you freely, but will not ask you to answer this letter, as I shall return to Washington in a day or two, when I shall ask your advice verbally."

<sup>1</sup> Llewellyn Powers, elected to the House of Representatives in 1876; governor of Maine in 1896 and 1898.



Senator Hamlin advised Mr. Blaine to enter the Cabinet, in the belief that his talents would find a larger and more satisfying scope as secretary of state than as senator.

Just before he retired from the Senate, Mr. Hamlin casually expressed a desire to visit Europe, but without the intention of asking Garfield for a foreign appointment. General Garfield heard of Mr. Hamlin's wish, and when he came to Washington to be inaugurated he voluntarily offered to appoint Mr. Hamlin minister to Germany, Italy, or Spain. Mr. Hamlin had not expected this, and as the Spanish mission was regarded as an easy one to fill, and the appointment offered him an opportunity for European travel, he concluded to take the last named post. "But," said he in relating the interview, "I told Garfield that I would accept on condition that I should be allowed to resign after a year's tenure of office." President Garfield consented, and the last official act of his life was to send Mr. Hamlin's name to the Senate as minister to Spain. He said to Secretary Blaine at the time, "This is an appointment in which I take a great personal pleasure and satisfaction." He then left the White House, and the assassin's bullet robbed the nation of a generous nature and a promising career. By a curious coincidence, when Arthur came to Washington to become President, it was his first official act to return Mr. Hamlin's name to the Senate for confirmation. He also asked him to attend his private inauguration. In 1872, when Wilson and Colfax were candidates for Vice-President, General Arthur entertained some Maine men, and to them he related some inside history of the Baltimore convention of 1864, and added that it was the regret of his life that Mr. Hamlin did not succeed Mr. Lincoln.

Mr. Hamlin's nomination was unanimously confirmed by the Senate without the customary reference to a committee first, and in November, 1881, he and his wife sailed from Philadelphia, where they had been the guests of Alan Wood, who had served in Congress with Mr. Hamlin, and was one of his closest friends. They reached Liverpool after an uneventful voyage, and were the guests of S. B. Packard, then the United States consul-general at that port. Mr. Hamlin liked Liverpool, and described it as more like an American city than any other European city he visited. The docks especially excited his admiration, and the activity of the place appealed to him. Sympathizing with progress, he did not find much to interest him in Chester, which is said to be the first city the Romans built in England. The cathedral seemed to him to display relics rather than religion. One cathedral would answer for him, and he thought it "the grand show in every European city, the parade horse of them all." Mr. Hamlin visited the Duke of Westminster's palace and estate just outside of Chester. The palace is one of the finest in

England, and the estate contains about seventeen thousand acres. The duke was the richest man in England. Mr. Hamlin's terse account of his visit was chiefly confined to the grounds, which he pronounced "perfect" and "like fairy-land." The duke and the palace were of secondary consideration. Mr. Hamlin remained in Liverpool a few days, and after a short stay in London proceeded to Paris.

Levi P. Morton, the United States minister to France at that time, and subsequently Vice-President, met Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin in Paris, and presented them to President Grévy at a reception in their honor. Gambetta was also present. Mr. Hamlin wrote that he was "surprised to find that President Grévy and M. Gambetta knew all about his anti-slavery record and association with Lincoln." They asked him many questions about incidents in his life, and were exceedingly interesting in their turn. President Grévy impressed Mr. Hamlin as a kind-hearted, unpretentious, and well-meaning man; M. Gambetta as a more showy, striking, and original man. He visited the Senate and the House of Deputies the next day at their invitation, and was received again by Gambetta, who was desirous of knowing the impression the debates made on Mr. Hamlin. Gambetta remarked that he supposed that they were more noisy than in Congress. Mr. Hamlin appears to have evaded the question, to avoid drawing a direct comparison. He replied that "it reminded me of our popular meetings," and his accounts of the noise, the interruptions, and calls he heard evidence the necessity he felt for making this diplomatic answer. There were other delicate attentions paid Mr. Hamlin, but that which he made especial note of in his letters was the act of many Americans he did not know, who stopped him in the street to pay him their respects. This seemed to surprise and please him.

While Paris charmed Mr. Hamlin, and seemed to him to be the most desirable city to live in that he had visited in Europe, he was glad to return to London to resume his sight-seeing there. Everything was strange in France, while there was much in England that was familiar. He and his wife were the guests of Francis Bennoch, the English author, and spent a week with him, seeing the principal points of interest. Mr. Hamlin's letters show that he was more impressed with the purely human side of London than with its pomp and historical institutions. He wrote of the parks as blessings to the poor, "the lungs of the city," and ornaments to the metropolis rather than as sight of show. Old London reminded him of Boston; it was a Cretan labyrinth: and, threading his way through the lanes and alleys, he felt that he at last understood patriotism as understood in America, — "something that knew no North, South, East, or West." Lincoln's Inn was quaint, but the intricate interior amused him, and

he wrote : " If the barristers can lead their clients out of the mazes of the law as skillfully as they go through these winding and crooked ways, they must be able and learned in their profession." Kensington he greatly enjoyed, and wrote that it would take him months to study the pictures there. He noted an amusing trick of his mind. Of the hundreds of blending pictures, the one that stood out the most distinctly was a dog by Landseer. " He stood out so distinctly from the canvas that a few feet away it did not seem possible that it was a delusion. Give my regards to Joe (his Newfoundland dog), and tell him he was in my thoughts when I saw Landseer's dog."

In Paris, Mr. Hamlin had met James Russell Lowell, who intended to arrange an interview between Mr. Hamlin and Mr. Gladstone ; but the latter was out of London, and Parliament was also in adjournment. Mr. Hamlin casually investigated certain financial, agricultural, and industrial conditions before he left London. Describing the labyrinth of old London, he wrote, " From these lanes and dark alleys the arms of commerce reach out all over the world, and right there is the financial centre of the world. Whether that centre will ever be changed, no one can tell, but situated as our country is, about midway between Europe and India, it seems to me that we are to become the centre of commerce and finance. But this is mere speculation. Who can even conjecture what it will be when the long ages shall have passed over us as they have already passed over Europe and India? . . . I looked into as well as I could, and talked with many about the agriculture of England. It looks to me to be more and more certain that England must be dependent upon the United States for almost all articles of food, and I think you can hardly except any articles but turnips and barley. . . . I was surprised at the result of my inquiries and observations. I believe that there is no nation that can successfully compete with us. If I am right in my impressions, it is a very favorable condition of things for the United States."

Mr. Hamlin described his journey into Spain, his impressions of the country, and his meeting with the king and queen, in the following letter, which was probably the longest one he ever wrote. Writing from Madrid, on January 5, 1882, he took up his story at the Spanish boundary : —

MY DEAR SONS,— I believe in my last letter I suggested that I would write you at the boundary of Spain. There at a little past noon we changed from the French to the Spanish cars. My baggage, as a courtesy to all ministers, was passed without examination. The Pyrenees did not seem far away, but it became dark before we finally got into them. We therefore had a good opportunity to see



them in our approach. It was remarkable how similar was the scenery to that of the Alleghany Mountains as we pass them in going west from Philadelphia or Washington. The valleys were well cultivated, as well as away up the hillsides, and large orchards were abundant upon the hillsides ; and I learned that a large quantity of apples and pears were produced, — we have the apples and pears here in Madrid coming from that section, and the pears resemble in looks and taste very much those which I raise at home. We saw very few fruit-trees as we came through France from Paris. The soil, too, in Spain, before reaching the mountains, was of a much better quality, and better cultivated, than what we saw in France. The towns and villages through which we traveled were particularly Spanish, — the buildings stouter, heavier, and more clumsily built, and less neat in appearance. After dark we could of course see nothing of the country. The road is called the road of tunnels, and they are very numerous ; some, I would judge, were a mile or more long each. It must have been more costly than any road I have seen, and required in its construction rare and skillful engineering. We were about a hundred miles from Madrid, when light in the morning enabled us to see, and the country was the picture of desolation, barren, rocky, and sterile. Some fifty miles before reaching Madrid, we began to see signs of culture, and a few scattering buildings and a few small hamlets. Some quite large fields were ploughed for wheat crops next spring, but the soil looked poor indeed, and I am informed will not yield above five or six bushels to the acre, — a discouraging outlook, our farmers would truly say. We passed in the night the city of Valladolid, of some sixty thousand or more, around which I believe there is a fertile country. When I go home, or at some time, I mean to go through the mountains in the daytime, over that part of the road where I came in the night. Reached Madrid between eight and nine in the morning, and were met at the station by General Fairchild and Secretary Reed, and taken to the Hôtel de Russe, where apartments had been engaged for me, where we now are and will probably remain. Ellen has, I believe, written all about our hotel and how we live. It would be only repetition for me to say anything.

Madrid, as you are aware, is very near the centre of Spain, and about twenty-five hundred feet above the sea, and upon a broad plateau of a hundred or more miles in diameter, and must be the poorest part of Spain outside the mountains proper. It was made the capital by Philip the Second, and there is a tradition that he selected the place as he found that mutton exposed to the open air would keep longer than in any other place in Spain. I should judge that might be about as good a reason as could be found. With us it would be about as sensible to place our capital out on the alkaline plains, as

they are very near the centre of our country. And yet, in time, a beautiful city of 500,000 population has been built up here, and large structures are going up all over it. The sterile look of the country is the great drawback. But in the spring and early summer it will look better than now, but it cannot get rid of the stamp of sterility that God has placed upon it. Art, culture, and great expenditures of money have done all that can be done to overcome the conditions of nature; and it is little less than marvelous to see what has been accomplished. We see all the trappings of royalty and splendid wealth side by side with abject and squalid poverty.

The male population resemble the people in our own cities, except the cloak is the principal over-garment, though many wear the same overcoat that we do. The women, too, look like our women, but differing much in some particulars in their dress. The larger portion, full three fourths, of the women, on the streets, wear nothing on their heads but a mantilla, which is a piece of lace, and it looks neat and very pretty and becoming. But the women who come into the city from the country or provinces are dressed in more colors than are afforded in the rainbow, and rainbow colors are very prominent. The men, too, are very queerly dressed, and they, too, indulge in a variety of colors. There are about fifty provinces in Spain, and I am told that nearly every province has its distinct and peculiar costume; and that one acquainted in Spain can distinguish the residence of each province by the costume.

I doubt if there is a city in the world, outside of the Oriental nations, which contains so large a population as Madrid in the same extent of territory. The city is very compact, while the streets are, as a whole, of fair width; but the buildings are four, five, and six stories high, constructed into flats, and accommodate a great number of persons. The modern part of the city is laid out into broad streets and avenues, and are adorned with trees, with parks and gardens by them, and they must be very beautiful when the trees and shrubbery are green. All Madrid, it would seem, is out to drive every day that is pleasant; every day but one has been pleasant since we have been here. But of climate and weather I will say something farther on. The turnouts are all fairly good, but those of royalty as well as of the nobility are magnificent, but too brilliant for my tastes — but I suppose it is all right. I think the king, queen, and infanta (the princess) ride out four or five times a week. I think Ellen has described these rides quite fully to you.

When I arrived here, I found that General Fairchild had not received his letter of recall, and I was detained twelve days before I could have an audience with the king. That took place December 20, and there was a grand parade in my going to and returning from



the palace. Secretary Reed went with me, and the king's carriages were sent for us, — one in which Mr. Reed rode alone just in advance of me, the other was occupied by myself and the introducer of ambassadors, who was to introduce me to the king. There was a guard of mounted men in front and rear of my carriage, with officers of the army and navy on each side of the carriage. They were literally covered over with gold lace, and the horses were gilded all over with gold. I think you would have laughed heartily to have seen your plain republican father toted along with all these trappings of royalty. But then it was all in accordance with established custom, and had to be performed. There was nothing for me to do but submit, look on, and reflect, as you may be sure I did. The palace is a magnificent building — said to be one of the finest in the world. It is of granite, and I will guess four or five hundred feet square, with an open court in the centre, and an archway through which is a drive into the court. I entered that court, from which I ascended a long stairway ornamented with statuary, and richly gilded and ornamented, and was taken into an ante-chamber of about 30 X 40 feet — it might be larger. The room was a fine one, with several large paintings, and I think some tapestry on the walls. Here I remained about five minutes, when the doors were opened, and I was, in company with my secretary, taken in by the introducer of ambassadors. As I stepped into the door I was introduced as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America. I then bowed to the king, and he returned the salutation; I then advanced a few steps, and again bowed to the king, and he returned it; and I continued to advance until I was within eight or ten feet of the king when I again saluted him with another bow, he again returning it. I then read from a manuscript what I have sent you a copy of; the king replied, and I have sent you a copy of what he read. The king then advanced, extended to me his hand, and said, "I know very well of you, and cheerfully welcome you to Spain." He was very cordial. He speaks English quite well. After chatting a few minutes upon two or three matters, he said, — and I quote his words, — "And now, Mr. Hamlin, will you go with me into the other room and see my *wife*?" — he did not say the queen, but my wife. He won points with me in that very thing. Wife with him was higher than queen. So I accompanied the king to the apartments of the queen, and was very cordially received by her. She inquired particularly about my wife and children, and expressed the hope that I would find my residence in Madrid pleasant, and also asked how I was pleased with it, etc., to all of which I replied. I think my audience was about ten minutes. She then said, as I arose to leave, "You will bring your wife to see me," to which I responded affirmatively. The king was in the uniform of a



lieutenant-general, as that is the custom in receiving ministers. The queen was dressed richly, but plainly. Afterwards when I met the king with Ellen, he was in just a plain citizen dress, and the queen was just a well dressed lady. But Ellen will tell you all about that. What I said to the king I sent him a copy of a few days in advance, so he would know how to answer me.

I was charmed with the deportment of the king and queen. It was just that of the perfect gentleman and accomplished lady, with not a particle of grandeur and royalty—it was easy, social, and affable.

In the room where I met the king were the prime minister and the officials of the palace all in full uniform, and that the uniforms were full and dazzling you can be certain. I believe I made no mistake or blunder. Mr. Reed complimented me on the manner in which I went through the ceremony. On the whole, I was glad when it was over.

Now something of the climate. I had heard much of the severity of the winter and the terrible heat of the summer here. Since my arrival I have had quoted to me a Spanish maxim, which I cannot remember in that tongue, but I do remember the translation,—"Madrid, a place three months severe winter and hell the rest of the year." Now if the summer season shall come no nearer to that supposed very hot place than the winter shall approach even the winter temperature of Maine, then Madrid may be set down as an elysium on earth. What the hot weather is I am yet to feel; but having been here since the 8th of December, I can judge something of the severe cold. I have not seen during that time any frost, but on one morning—and every day but one has been pleasant, with a bright blue sky. I should say that the weather all the month of December has been very like that of our Indian summer in Maine—it may have been a very little colder, but very little if any. This in the city; but out of the city it has been colder, for the king said on the 31st of December that he had skating three or four days on a little pond or pool of water on his grounds out of the city about two or three miles. So on the whole I can conceive of no finer weather for winter—I certainly would not ask for any milder weather—I think it is as nearly perfect as possible.

There are 14,000 or 15,000 troops stationed in Madrid. I see occasionally a squad, once a company and once a battalion in the streets. They are a fine-looking class of men and finely uniformed, and I am told with the best of modern arms. But you will see soldiers off duty all over the city, in every street and at all times. It speaks plainly that the government puts its support upon military organizations.

I think that I have said about enough, but I will fill the sheet.

Ellen is getting on well with her Spanish. The language is beautiful, but its pronunciation is such that I shall not try to learn much, as I fear I would twist my mouth out of all shape or dislocate my jaws. I now know Spanish enough to bid one enter my rooms when he knocks ; can say good-morning and good-evening ; can call for hot water to shave me with, and can order the lamps for my room, though I rather think they may all smile at the pronunciation in which I do it. I inclose you a picture of the palace, and Ellen will send one to Han and Frank.

Your affectionate father,

H. HAMLIN.

Send this to the boys after you have read it. If you think Judge Appleton would like it, you may send this to him.

The boys will send you Ellen's letter, giving an account of her presentation at the palace.

Life in Madrid was pleasant, but after a month there happened to be a relaxation of official duty, and Mr. Hamlin took the opportunity to visit Italy. He wrote but a few letters, which are interesting as evidencing his sympathy for the multitude. While he studied the artistic treasures of the Old World with pleasure, it is noticeable that the condition of the people dominated his thoughts. His ideas were tersely expressed in the following passage in a letter to Charles J. Talbot, from Rome, February 17, 1882 : —

“Let me say a few words of a general character. From these few words you will judge of my reflections upon what I see. The ruins of the past, existing before the Christian era, the cunning skill of the artist in almost producing life upon the canvas, and the wonderful productions of the chisel on the marble little less than amaze one. Yet there is that which commands my observation in a greater degree. When I see the priests, who swarm the country like locusts, a standing army almost clouding the land, the trappings of royalty, and last the toiling millions, I cannot help contrasting our government and the condition of our people with this, and I see and feel how sublimely our republican government towers over and above all I behold. I am prouder of my citizenship and love my country the better.”

After spending two months in Italy, France, and Switzerland, Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin returned to Madrid, and the routine of official life was resumed. While it is not intended to review Mr. Hamlin's diplomatic duties, the story of his official and personal intercourse with the Spanish government and people is of interest and his impressions important. He held the office of minister to Spain for a year, and in that time familiarized himself with the conditions of the government and the people. The proverbial Spanish courtesy with

which he was received wherever he was invited and his own sense of courtesy precluded him from giving public expressions of his views of Spain. He did make known several amusing experiences he had with the dilatory diplomats of that country, but his grave thoughts he kept to himself and his friends. In a few words, Mr. Hamlin saw but little hope for Spain; and while he rarely failed to speak of the courtesy of the people, he nevertheless said that they were lacking in true character. But he would add that he had hopes for Spain as long as Alphonso XII. lived, since he had the good of the country at heart and strove to improve it. He thought that Alphonso would be just as democratic as his ministers would allow him, but they were not democratic, and on this account the king's intercourse with the people was restricted. Yet the real trouble with Spain was the Spaniard himself. He was proud, indolent, unprogressive, — an anachronism.

Mr. Hamlin knew Castelar, Sagasta, Canovas, the papal nuncio, and other leading statesmen and prominent men of Spain. He enjoyed pleasant intercourse with the men mentioned. He liked Castelar, and held extended interviews with him regarding the government of Spain and the Spanish people. The great republican frankly but sadly admitted that the Spanish people were not fit to govern themselves, and that that was the cause of the republic's failure. They needed a strong right hand to govern them, and a monarchy for the present was best. In his studies of the Spanish people Mr. Hamlin found this view borne out by convincing evidence. One point he called attention to shows how he went to the root of things in a simple and sure manner. He was appalled at the extraordinary mortality among the children of Madrid, and sought an explanation. The climate, incompetent medical attendance, poverty, were all assigned, but none satisfied him. He quickly discovered that half the families of Madrid sat out on the promenades with babes until midnight. He earnestly deprecated this carelessness, but the indolent dons murmured their surprise, though thanking his excellency for his kindly feelings. It was a national habit. Why change it? And perhaps the gracious señor was wrong.

In brief, the picture Mr. Hamlin painted of the Spanish people was the familiar one, with the principal scenes drawn from his own observations, — a courteous, happy, proud, indolent race, living in the past, enmeshed in superstition, blind to their best interests, jealous and suspicious of innovations. They were content to dance through life, and satisfied to throw the burden of thought on priest and church. They were their own worst enemies. There was an understrain of sadness throughout it all. Perhaps the most pitiful of all was that small group of brave statesmen and writers who were the progressionists, and yet



knew their dreams were vain. Their nation was doomed. Mr. Hamlin traced the decadence of Spain to the expulsion of the Moors, who were its ablest and most progressive element. They cultivated the soil, and sunk wells all through the land. The Spanish erred in driving them out as badly as the Americans would in forcing out their artisans and mechanics. When the Spanish took this step, they wrote the edict of their own decay. At the same time it was a vital blow to the Moors. Mr. Hamlin visited the Barbary States to study the Moors. They had lost their civilization in losing Spain.

Mr. Hamlin found indolence a national fault in the Spanish people, from the statesman who directed great affairs to the peasant who tilled the land with a stick. He told several stories of amusing experiences with the government officials that illustrated this failing. On the first occasion, when he had official business to transact, the Spanish State Department sent him important papers to be signed. He read them at once, and, seizing his pen, he was about to sign them, when the Spanish diplomat who had presented him with the papers interrupted and said with several bows: "To-morrow, your excellency; please sign to-morrow, and I will then call for the papers." This procrastination was not pleasant to Mr. Hamlin, and he appears to have expressed himself vigorously on several occasions. On the other hand, the Spanish diplomats were equally surprised at his promptness and terse way of coming to the point. He said in relating this: "They were really pained to find that I wanted to do an act on the spot." An incident that greatly amused Mr. Hamlin was his experience in getting a permit to receive some cigars sent him free of duty, which was allowed as a courtesy to foreign diplomats. He applied for the permit, and the cigars arrived. Several months after he had smoked the last one the permit was forwarded.

On the whole, Mr. Hamlin's diplomatic experience with the Spanish government did not suit him, although he managed by insistence to accomplish what the United States government desired. But while it was pleasant living in sunny Spain, there was a pleasanter place, and that was home. He had desired only a year abroad, and when that had passed away, he tendered his resignation. When his successor, John W. Foster, since secretary of state, arrived at Madrid, Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin took leave of their friends and acquaintances, and proceeded leisurely homeward. They arrived in Maine after a little over a year's absence. On Mr. Hamlin's arrival in Bangor, the people of his old home gave him another public reception. The addresses were made by Mayor Lysander Strickland, ex-Mayors Edward B. Neally and Frederick M. Laughton, Samuel H. Blake, Abram Sanborn, ex-Governor Daniel F. Davis, and Congressman Charles A. Boutelle, who was then entering on his long, useful, and

distinguished public career. He made the principal speech, sketching Mr. Hamlin's life, and noting that it almost spanned that of the republic from the administration of Jefferson to Arthur's; that he had seen the nation grow from seventeen States and seven millions of people to thirty-eight States and fifty millions; that he had borne an honorable part in the grandest chapter of the world's history; that he had lived to hasten the edict of emancipation; and could now rest in the affection of his people and home.

Mr. Hamlin's reply was very brief, though full of feeling.

"The deep blue sky that bends above, and the twinkling stars that look down, afford a pleasant augury. Coming from other lands, this greeting is an augury that stars cannot furnish or forestall. No language is adequate to express the emotions of my heart. Of my public life and public services alluded to by my friends it does not become me to speak. I have endeavored to do my duty as best I knew. I may have failed, as others have, but I have done what I conscientiously believed to be right, and I am proud to say that there is not in my political life a single act that I would blot out.

"After an absence of fourteen months, I return with unalloyed pleasure. You cannot tell how joyfully and with what intense pleasure I look into the familiar faces of those I have long known. My residence abroad has been full of interest. It has given me a pleasant opportunity to study the customs, habits, and laws of the people I have been among. From the king, the members of the royal family, and from all connected with the Spanish government, I have been the recipient of most pleasant and courteous treatment. I have with much interest examined the workings of governments in foreign lands, and while there is much that is good in other governments, I can say without dogmatism that this is God's own country. There is not a pulsation of my heart that does not love this land. I have come home to have among my neighbors a happy ending of my life, if the good health a kind Providence has bestowed continues."

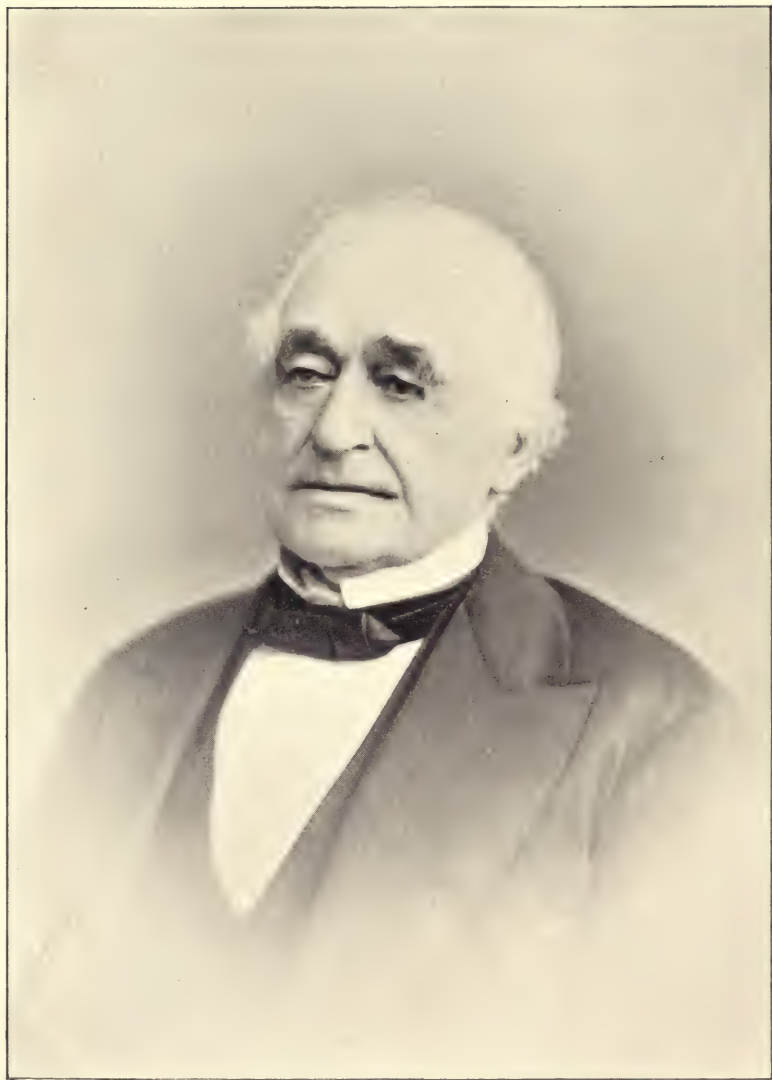
## CHAPTER XLII

### THE LAST YEARS

THE last years of Mr. Hamlin's life form a pleasant afterglow to those of his arduous and eventful career. He fell into the routine of retirement, and grew old grandly. He enjoyed every day of the evening of his old age, and seemed to be the happiest old man in Maine. While he had, perhaps, not unnatural apprehensions at first that he "could not learn how to do nothing," as he jocosely termed a life of leisure, he had enough to do to occupy his time pleasantly. He entered into the social life of Bangor with zest, he enjoyed his neighbors, he kept his little farm until almost the end, he occasionally spoke in the campaigns, he was a constant figure at the Grand Army camp-fires, he fished, read, traveled, — in short, he lived the life of a country squire rather than that of a retired statesman. No one ever heard him regret his decision to leave public life, and enjoy his old age at home; indeed, one meeting him for the first time was not likely to hear him speak of his public life of his own accord. His services were, of course, much sought for in political times, and there are a few more incidents of this kind to relate; but he was averse to returning to politics, and as he mellowed out "in the blaze of excellence" he seemed to forget party animosities, and was glad to be reconciled with former personal opponents. One of the last acts of his life was to ask a Republican President to retain a Democrat through his full term in a high office solely on the grounds of faithful service. To the end he was blessed with the graces of old age, and spared its infirmities.

Mr. Hamlin's home is an attractive and picturesque place. It is a typical New England homestead, embowered with trees and flowers, and standing on an estate where a retired, elm-shaded street and one of the thoroughfares of the city meet. The residence, a large, three-story frame mansion, rests between an orchard on one side, a flower-garden on the other, with a little vegetable patch with waving corn and currant bushes in the rear. On three sides are rows of elm, maple, white birch, and cedar trees. In front is a pretty little lawn, while rosebushes here and there and flowers and plants give a graceful touch to the picture. In snug retreat near the house is a vine-covered well, suggestive of New England life of other days. Adjoin-





HANNIBAL HAMLIN. AET. 80.



ing the flower-garden is the home of General Hamlin. Thus the veteran passed the latter part of his life among his sons and grandsons and in a "garden of nature." There was a hive in the orchard and a dovecot in the stable. It was a pleasant sight to see the gray-haired veteran of many a stormy contest spending his last days among his flowers, trees, and bees, communing with nature and enjoying the flower-laden atmosphere of his home. He could have wished no pleasanter place to pass his closing years.

Another writer gave an interesting picture of Mr. Hamlin in his home and its interior. "Passing over the porch you are shown into a parlor, neatly furnished. Nothing stiffly modern in furniture or furnishings forces you to sit upright, nor is there the stuffy haircloth, bead-basket odor common to so many New England parlors. The room has a perfect chain of flowers, and what is most agreeable to them, they are arranged by hands that know the art. Nothing formal, every idea graceful as is 'kind nature's neatest housewifery.' Opposite, over the mantle, hangs an admirable copy of Stuart's Washington. Engravings of Lincoln and Grant and a photograph of Mr. Hamlin further embellish the walls. There are bookcases and a piano. On the well-stored shelves political and scientific works intermingle with poetry, painting, biography, and history. The Smithsonian Reports, piles of Harpers and the Atlantic, Tennyson's poems, Lives of Lincoln, Webster, Sumner, and others, encyclopædias and others find a home together. Before your inspection can go farther, Mr. Hamlin enters. You are greeted by a man of rather medium stature, which you later observe is caused by a slight stoop. The face has the ruddiness, the eyes a coal-black, all the strength they ever owned. Beneath iron-gray bushy eyebrows, they with the prominent forehead, pronounced nose, and firm mouth impress you at once that you are in the presence of marked ability. It is a sensation somewhat akin to that you always feel when face to face with a bust of Daniel Webster."

Mr. Hamlin was often pictured in social life, though only a few lasting glimpses were revealed in the pages of his crowded life. He loved to be among congenial people at their social gatherings, and if he did not say much his beaming face and gentle manner showed it. He liked dancing, card-playing, and the theatre. While, with Wellington and other men of iron, he disliked music, yet, as is often the case with men of this sort, he had an accurate rhythmic sense, and danced well. In his younger days he could cut the pigeon-wing, and in his old age, like General Sherman, he enjoyed the society of bright-faced young women at the dance, and sometimes opened the ball. Another writer pictured him among his people, and moralized as follows: "It looked so strange to me to see this companion of Abraham Lincoln dancing like a boy, knowing all the figures, his large frame and old



age putting no check on his energy, though his countenance never relaxed from dignity. We are brought up wrong and taught to believe in appearances. Some of us are taught to believe that any man who will dance will go to hell. Persons of no great virtue will wonder whether the associate of Lincoln, who has gone to glory, should be dancing on this earth among the lads and lassies. How absurd this education! Not a Scottish king but danced among his people. Not a Highland or Lowland duke or marquis but makes himself at home with his clan on festive occasions, just like Mr. Hamlin."

When Mr. Hamlin retired, one of the pleasantest coincident happenings in Bangor was the establishing of the Tarratine Club, which filled a long-felt need in the social life of the city. He was elected president, and the Tarratine was of no little pleasure to him the rest of his life. He was almost certain to find his way there every afternoon except Sunday, and enjoy a game of cards with his old friends. Card-playing, indeed, was a source of relaxation and delight to him all his life. Mr. Hamlin had no sympathy for puritanical notions, and looked on dancing, card-playing, and theatre-going as enjoyable and sensible forms of amusement and instruction, if not abused. He never gambled or made a bet in his life. Men would no more dare to propose to him to play cards for money than they would dare to tell an indecent story in his presence. His views were as well known as his practices. He played cards as he did everything else, as well as he could, and many amusing stories were told of his innocent enjoyment in "bluffing" an opponent in euchre. When he was fairly in a game he went in with his whole nature, and did not like to be interrupted. The ruling passion to win was ever strong with him. When he was told that he had been nominated for Vice-President, he was at a game of euchre. He laughingly whispered to Wade and Colfax: "You people have spoiled a good lone hand I held."

While Mr. Hamlin was not a regular theatre-goer, he nevertheless made it a point to see the best plays and actors whenever he could spare the time, and he became an excellent judge of acting and the drama. He likewise knew many of the leading players of the time, and numbered some of them among his personal friends. He did not parade his views, and it was a surprise to those of critical experience to find how wide was his knowledge and sound his judgment. When he became a theatre-goer, the playhouse was still under the ban of Puritan prejudice. His attitude was that of the broad and tolerant public, which saw the theatre as a means of enjoyment, enlightenment, and education. He regarded acting as a dignified profession, and he estimated actors at their own personal worth. He knew Forrest, Junius Brutus Booth, William Warren, James E. Murdock, Charlotte Cushman, E. A. Sothern, E. L. Davenport, the elder Wallack, Burton,

and many other leaders of the stage in his day. Forrest, who showed Mr. Hamlin his best side, valued his opinions and sought his advice about entering politics, which Mr. Hamlin thought would be a mistake. He regarded Booth the elder as a greater genius than his more scholarly son Edwin, and thought the latter was best as Iago. William Warren he considered as the most versatile comedian of his day, and Jefferson unrivaled in his own rôle. While he enjoyed the classic drama, he preferred the modern drama, for he liked to keep up with the times.

A glance at Mr. Hamlin's library would satisfy good judges that he was a lover of books and a well-read man, though as a rule only inquiry brought out what he had read. Consciously or unconsciously, he generally followed the precept of Emerson, and did not buy a book until it had been out a year. His library, though small, was well chosen, and was composed of historical, biographical, educational, scientific, poetic, romantic, and dramatic works of standard authors. He best liked the books of Americans, and he best enjoyed biography. He was opposed to what may be called the Latin and Greek humbug, that is, the custom of drilling the youth of the country in dead languages and their classics before they were familiar with their own tongue and the great men of their own nation. He believed that a child should learn how to stand before it tried to walk. Thus he read, for example, the life of Horace Mann with peculiar pleasure, one whom he had well known and esteemed as the noblest educator of his age. The lives of Lincoln, Webster, Grant, Washington, Jefferson, and other illustrious Americans were also to him a constant source of pleasure and profit. In the field of historical romance he preferred Cooper, and also liked Scott. Dickens and Thackeray were not favorites of his, though he recognized the former as a great humanitarian, and the latter as a true artist. But their books did not specially appeal to him; he preferred to read about his own people.

Perhaps Mr. Hamlin read poetry almost as widely as prose, and in a casual way he was a student of the drama. He was thoroughly familiar with the poems of Whittier, — a dearly beloved personal friend, — and of Bryant and Campbell. He recited verses from Whittier, Scott, and Campbell by heart, and was fond of quoting from them. They were poets of the people. He also knew Shakespeare well, and studied both his plays and poems. His library included a collection of the standard plays of his day, such as Bulwer Lytton's "Richelieu" and "Money," Sheridan's "School for Scandal," "The Ticket-of-Leave-Man," and others, all of which he had annotated. In truth he had the artistic nature and appreciation of the beautiful, although in his busy life he had opportunity to develop it only in a casual way. When his attention was called to artistic subjects he

would express his ideas in an original manner. John Quincy Adams Ward, the sculptor, recalled one of these expressions after he had made a bust of Mr. Hamlin. It was during the civil war, and while he was anxious and preoccupied, Mr. Ward found him punctual, patient, and agreeable. "During his first sittings the art seemed rather new to him, and he seemed to question its utility, but after a moment's reflection he remarked: 'Oh, yes; only another way of recording painting or poetry, a phase of it — that words cannot express.'"

Mr. Hamlin was not a poet, and did not profess to be one, yet he could write smooth verse, and occasionally did so, though with no intention that his poetry should become public property. Once, however, he composed a poem which William Cullen Bryant reprinted in the "New York Evening Post," in 1855. The occasion was the celebration of the semi-centennial of the founding of Hebron Academy, where Mr. Hamlin received his brief education. His lines were as follows:—

"Back to these scenes of early years,  
Of youthful hopes, of joys and fears,  
Back to these halls to learning dear,  
We come, to pay our homage here.  
All the events of toil or plays,  
Connected with our schoolboy days;  
Your rugged hills, your lovely girls,  
With laughing eyes and shining curls;  
The stage, on which we strode, and where  
In halls was trained the young idea;  
The old church, too, whose aisles we trod,  
To listen to the word of God;  
These groves, thro' which we lov'd to stray,  
And while a leisure hour away;  
To loiter here in glee and pride,  
With winning beauty by our side;  
Then 'Greenwood's hills' loom on the right,  
With 'Singepole' bursting on the sight;  
While far above, and o'er the rest,  
Old 'Streaked Mountain' rears its crest;  
These things and scenes before us pass,  
Like colors in a magic glass.  
No fairer scenes will meet the eye,  
Beneath the sky of Italy;  
And you'll not meet a brighter glance,  
From beauty, in the land of France,  
Than you will find among these hills,  
Or in the music of their rills;  
And unto us, where'er we stray,  
We find no scenes like this, to-day.  
Where erst in childhood we have played,  
The very trees beneath whose shade  
We sported, mused, and gamboled then,  
Attach us to them more as men.



"The babbling brook, that struggles on,  
Beside whose banks we 've strayed along,  
And traced its winding course about  
To angle for the speckled trout,  
Yields music as it leaps along,  
More pleasing than the poet's song.  
Oh ! happy hours of youth we 've spent,  
On thy green banks in merriment.  
Up yonder mountain, dark and gray,  
We oft have traced our weary way,  
To chase sly reynard from his lair,  
Or to arouse the awkward hare ;  
To start the pheasant and 'to brace  
Our active sinews for the chase : '  
These scenes are o'er, but they, forsooth,  
Were happy pastimes of our youth.

"And last, not least, the social dance,  
Where we have seen the winning glance  
From beauty's eye — bright, sparkling, fair,  
Play o'er the forms assembled there —  
All — all are scenes so strongly set  
In memory, that we 'll ne'er forget.  
The water's foam, the mountain side,  
The social dance, where'er we bide —  
The impress made on life's young heart  
Will only with our life depart.

"But one sad thought comes o'er us now.  
A shade of sorrow clouds the brow ;  
There were glad hearts, to us most dear,  
Who trod the path of learning here,  
Who shared our sports, joined in our toil,  
And conned their task by 'midnight oil.'  
Who built with us those fabrics fair,  
In prose called 'castles in the air ;'  
Resolved, with us, to meet the frown  
Of life, and nobly bear it down ;  
And do great things, no doubt. But where,  
Where are they now ? Not with us here.  
Some to far distant lands have hied,  
Away from friends and home have died ;  
The bones of some bleach on the plain,  
And some are whit'ning in the main ;  
And others, once so full of mirth,  
Now slumber in the silent earth,  
While by God's mercy we 've been spar'd  
To gather round the festive board.  
Pause, then, and to their virtues dear,  
Pay the just tribute of a tear."

As with most public men the question was often asked, what was Mr. Hamlin's religion. To one who made the inquiry he replied

gently : " It is something too sacred for me to talk about." As Lincoln did, so did he often quote the lines :—

" There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."

His constant attendance at church was sufficient evidence of his belief in the Christian religion. His preference was for the Unitarian Church, and for some years he was president of the Unitarian Society of Maine. But he did not bind himself to any special creed or dogmas ; he was liberal in his faith. He loved the writings of Channing, and the quotations in some of his speeches show that he was influenced not a little by him. But his nature did not allow him to attach himself entirely to the leaders of his own church. The liberal men of all churches, who out of their faith, reason, and life taught the existence of a Supreme Being, were lights to him. Thus he believed that all Christian churches were necessary, since they all pointed in the end to the same goal, and also since it was necessary to appeal to different people in different ways. This was his view of toleration as practiced by the Unitarian Church. He honored the Catholic Hughes, the Episcopalian Brooks, and earnest laymen such as George Hay Stuart, a philanthropist and an Irish Presbyterian. When Stuart was presiding over the Young Men's International Christian Association at Washington in 1865, Mr. Hamlin wrote his wife : " I believe he is a good man, and a Christian if there ever was one on earth. I never in all my life ever saw a man where the goodness of his heart shone in his face as in Mr. Stuart's. No one, it seems to me, can know and not love him. What a noble man he is — God bless him."

Another glimpse of Mr. Hamlin's inner nature was revealed in his fondness for children and pets. He was necessarily abstracted by public duties, but he hardly failed in his voluminous home correspondence to speak of his children, and in terms of endearment which he would not want given to the public. Children were fascinated by him, and while they at first stood in awe of him on account of his striking appearance, his friendly, kind, and gentle ways at once won their confidence. When his younger sons and grandsons would tear through his house, and " raise the roof " with their frolics, he would quietly submit, and sometimes one would hear him say that he had not forgotten that he had once been a boy. He exacted strict obedience to his commands, but if there was any displeasure it was quickly over, and an atmosphere of kindness reassured the refractory one. On one occasion a young son and two little grandsons were impatient for a church service to end. They stood on the same stool, swaying over the pew in front, and saying in unison, " Amen, Amen ! " But the stool slipped out from underneath them, and to the scandal of the

congregation they pitched into the next pew just as the pastor was pronouncing the benediction. They were fished out, and reprobated by an awful look from those big, black eyes ; but when they marched home in disgrace they caught a twinkle in those same eyes that denoted forgiveness. Not a word was said. Another time he reprimanded a young son for fidgeting in church, whereupon the youngster upset the equanimity of the congregation by throwing his arms around his father's neck, and giving him a smack that resounded through the church. Mr. Hamlin laughed until the tears came.

No one who knew Mr. Hamlin could remember the time when he did not have a dog and a cat. He had at least, from first to last, a dozen dogs, and perhaps the last was the most interesting. This was Jack, a tiny terrier, which Mr. Hamlin could hold in his hand. The two were inseparable, and it was a quaint sight to see the tall veteran striding down town with the step of a young man, looking around now and then to see that he was not outstripping little Jack. He kept his pet in a basket by his chair near his fireplace. Sometimes he would lift the little fellow into his lap, and say, "Jack, I believe you love me for myself, and you don't ask anything but my love. Well, little dog, I would n't sell a wag of your tail for a thousand dollars." Jack kept his master to his word, and was jealous of any living being who wanted to share his privileges. Mr. Hamlin's favorite cat was a handsome and dignified Maltese named Pedro. He would walk into the sitting-room every morning, waving his tail like a banner, and rub around Mr. Hamlin's chair, say "good-morning" in his cat's way, and then retire to the kitchen. Jack would usually fly at Pedro, who never paid any attention to him. On one occasion Jack tried to bite Pedro, but the cat, who was a good fighter, slipped out of the room. A grandson noticed that his grandfather scolded Jack a little, and then followed Pedro. Out in the kitchen he found his grandfather bending over the cat, stroking his arching back, and saying gently : "It was good of you, Pedro, not to strike little Jack. You are a good cat, a real gentleman."

The suffering of dumb animals always caused Mr. Hamlin pain and concern. His home letters written in the Senate often had inquiries about the condition of a favorite dog or horse, and suggestions for its treatment. The best remembered incident was his grief over the fate of Jess, a white Morgan mare which his son Cyrus captured in West Virginia, and brought home from the war. When General Hamlin settled in New Orleans, where he died in 1867, he asked his father to promise him that if anything should happen to him, Jess should have a comfortable home. This was, indeed, one of the last requests Cyrus made of his father. In some respects Jess was a remarkable horse. She would always run up a hill, no matter how large a load



she was drawing. Mr. Hamlin worked Jess carefully, and while she was a fiery beast, and not fond of being petted, she would slip her nose into her master's hand whenever he was near. But she remained a genuine war-horse until the end of her life, and repelled advances from others. Jess lived to be probably more than twenty-five years old, and was comfortably passing her last days in a pasture when she broke a leg. The one in charge told Mr. Hamlin that it would be a mercy to kill her. The tears came to the old man's eyes. "No," he said, "I can't give the word." But it had to be done as soon as Mr. Hamlin left the scene. He afterwards wrote his wife: "I cared more for old Jess than some men I knew."

In his relations with his old friends Mr. Hamlin remained unchanged, no matter how humble their lot might be. Mountain born, his thoughts would turn to the home of his youth, the little village that nestled in the Switzerland of New England, and there he would find Hiram Hubbard, a companion of his boyhood, who kept the inn, and they would talk over the frolics and scrapes of their younger days with the enjoyment of youth. A born fisherman, he would seek brooks which, it was said, only himself knew, and he rarely failed to return with a large string of speckled beauties. He was one of the best fishermen in Maine, and his passion for angling carried him from home every season until the last year of his life. Sometimes he would take young men with him. Once an amusing story was told of some juniors who thought that they would "set an easy pace" for the veteran, only to find that he set a rapid one for them. But usually he hunted up his old friends for a fishing trip. One was Jere Patten, a rough jewel, who was the drummer in the Hampden Rifles, of which Mr. Hamlin was captain in his early days. He remained a humble farmer. When Patten began to decline, he sent for his old friend to say good-by, and an affecting scene took place. Patten dragged himself to the door of his little farmhouse, and putting his hand on Mr. Hamlin's shoulder, said: "I'm going to die. I know nothing about heaven, and I have offered only one prayer; that was when I died, I should go where you did."

Many incidents of Mr. Hamlin's democracy and belief in the dignity of manual labor left an impression on the minds of young people who were witnesses. Henry Lord, a leading citizen of Bangor, who has presided over both branches of the Maine legislature, related a story in evidence. He was a boy of fifteen, and Mr. Hamlin was then Vice-President. One day he was surprised to see Mr. Hamlin riding in a hay-cart, and also to hear him say, "Henry, don't you want to help me get my hay in?" Young Lord accepted the invitation, and they rode out to Mr. Hamlin's farm together. But there they found that the men engaged had been called over to Major Thomas Hersey's

farm. "Well, Henry," remarked Mr. Hamlin, pulling off his coat, "you and I will put in the hay." Mr. Hamlin pitched from the ground to the cart, where young Lord trod it down, and then from the cart to the mow, where Lord stowed it away. "It was a very hot day," said Mr. Lord, "and yet Mr. Hamlin enjoyed himself immensely. Although he was past middle life, yet he seemed to me to be one of the most powerful men I ever saw. The incident taught me a lesson in regard to the dignity of manual labor." Some years afterward, when Mr. Lord was president of the Board of Trade of Maine, he entertained a governor-general of Canada. When they drove by Mr. Hamlin's house, he was sawing wood in the back yard. "That man the illustrious Hannibal Hamlin! You Yankees are jokers," said the Englishman. "It seems to me," replied Mr. Lord with a quizzical smile, "that I have heard that Gladstone chopped wood for exercise."

A feat of strength which Mr. Hamlin performed was described by a grandson. He wrote: "My grandfather was at the time I saw this more than sixty years old, and in the Senate. He stood at the end of a large hay-rack, and pitched to a man who was at the other end and passed the hay up to another man in the barn chamber. These two men were veritable giants and both farmers. They fell to disputing as to which was the stronger, and the battle waxed hot. Presently I noticed that they were lifting larger and larger loads, which came with great rapidity. They stopped talking, and worked with desperation. All at once the man on the rack staggered up with an immense load, and he and the man in the barn chamber between them were unable to lift it in. They collapsed, and fell down panting and apparently exhausted. I had had an inkling of what was going on, and peering out of the barn chamber I saw my grandfather leaning on his pitchfork, surveying the scene of those two giants sprawling before him. I caught his eye. There was a twinkle in it as much as to say, 'You, see, my boy, they forgot me.' The boys in the yard told me that when the men began to brag, they saw my grandfather watching them quietly. Then, without saying a word, he began to bury the other men. There was a smile on his face, but he did not say a word. The twinkle in his eye told the story."

Mr. Hamlin retained his remarkable strength until the last year of his life, while his mental faculties remained alert. This was due both to his superior constitution and his simple habits of life. Manual labor was both a recreation and a health-saving device to him. The only physical ailment he suffered in his old age was rheumatism, and this he would combat after his own fashion. When he had a twinge, he would start for the wood-pile, and chop or saw wood. Then he would come into his house, eyes shining, and face wreathed with smiles. "Once more I have met my old enemy, and he is mine," he would



say, and sometimes he added : "There is nothing like work to cure ills of the flesh and mind. It is a sovereign remedy." Another thing that contributed to his good health was his temperate habits. He ate sparingly, and his diet was confined to simple and substantial dishes. For the larger part of his life his supper the year round was a bowl of milk and a little bread. He drank liquor only for medicinal purposes, and did not serve it on his table. He was an inveterate smoker, and it may be truthfully said of him that he was one of the rare men in this world who took up the habit at the advice of a physician. He went to bed early at nine o'clock as a rule, and rose with the sun. He wore the old-fashioned black "swallow-tail" coat, and did not put on an overcoat until he was well advanced in years. This evidenced his rugged health and the constant climate of Maine.

There were many stories told of Mr. Hamlin's consideration for others. A grandson wrote : "There was a serious illness at my father's house one winter when I was at college, and he wrote me that I would have to spend my Christmas vacation at my grandfather's. But when I arrived in town about four o'clock in the morning, I went directly home, and was anxious to go in to see my brother, who was ill with diphtheria. My father opened the door, and told me that it would not be safe for me to enter. My grandfather was expecting me, and I must go to his house across the garden. I objected, and said that with the thermometer below zero and the hour four o'clock, my grandfather would not be awake. 'You don't know him,' was the reply. 'You will find him waiting for you now.' I walked over to the other house with some misgivings, but my foot had no sooner touched the piazza than the front door opened, and my grandfather stood there, with a lamp in one hand, and his dog Jack under his other arm. 'Welcome, my grandson,' said he, like an old uncrowned king, 'you are *my* guest.' He had been up before my carriage arrived from the station, and received me with just as much cordiality and interest as if it had been high noon. He would not allow me to feel that I had disturbed him, and that early hour which I passed with him before the household was astir is one of the most delightful in my recollection of my grandfather."

Mr. Hamlin did not forget honesty or dishonesty in other men. Frederick H. Costello, a Bangor writer, said that when he was a boy he found a ten-dollar bill in front of Mr. Hamlin's house. He gave it to his father, and asked him to inquire whether it belonged to Mr. Hamlin. It happened that that day Mr. Hamlin had paid a man some thirty or forty dollars while standing at his gate. On entering his house he found that he was ten dollars short, and supposed that he had overpaid his bill. Taking out a five-dollar bill, he said to Mr. Costello, when the latter called, "I should have lost the ten dollars if



it had not been for your son, and I guess he is entitled to half. But you tell your boy to keep on being honest ; that's better than having money." Another incident was in the nature of retribution. A man, who may be called Blank, had been chosen to the legislature to vote for Mr. Hamlin in one of his anti-slavery battles for the Senate. But he broke his word, and, like many men of that kind, lied about Mr. Hamlin. He left the State eventually, and probably supposed that Mr. Hamlin had forgotten his conduct. Years afterward Mr. Hamlin was in Massachusetts at a reunion of old soldiers, and who should turn up but Mr. Blank. He hailed the veteran in an effusive manner, and with an oily smile spoke of their former acquaintance. Mr. Hamlin did not seem to recognize him until he exclaimed, "Why, have you forgotten John Blank?" "I have not forgotten that Blank," replied Mr. Hamlin somewhat grimly, "because he was an awful liar."

Mr. Hamlin did not take an active part in politics during the latter period of his life, because he felt that he was entitled to rest ; but he was deeply interested in the course of his party, and a special emergency brought him to the front. As the presidential campaign of 1884 approached, he saw with apprehension that factional differences were threatening the success of the party, and he came to the conclusion that in the interests of safety it would be wiser to defer the claims of both Arthur and Blaine, and choose a man who was not identified with either wing. In a letter which he caused to be published, he outlined the situation, hinting at defeat unless a new man should be nominated, and suggesting General Lucius Fairchild, of Wisconsin. At this time General Fairchild was commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, and was favorably considered as the soldier's candidate. He fulfilled the requirements of the presidency as laid down by Benton in his interesting letter to Mr. Hamlin on this subject. He was a gallant soldier, an upright executive of Wisconsin, a conspicuously creditable diplomat at Liverpool, Paris, and Madrid. He had strong common sense, a firm will, and was genial and approachable. Finally, he was an Ohio man by birth. But General Logan came on the scene as the soldier's candidate, and the chance for compromise was lost. The result of the election justified Mr. Hamlin's fears. The solid South, factional troubles, a bolt, and other causes defeated Mr. Blaine, and the country rued it until it came back to Republican principles of government.

Mr. Hamlin intended to take no part in this campaign on account of his age, but circumstances conspired to bring him on the stump. When he was closing his career in Congress, William McKinley was beginning his. A strong and interesting friendship grew up between them, — the veteran and the young statesman. In 1884 McKinley

found a hard fight for reelection before him, and wrote Mr. Hamlin, asking him to come to Ohio. But once out of the harness, the old senator did not desire to return, and declined. McKinley was not to be balked, and coming to Bangor, he and others induced Mr. Hamlin to join them on a stumping tour through the Aroostook valley. McKinley used his persuasive powers with such good effect that Mr. Hamlin was finally prevailed on to go West with him and speak in his district for him. But before they left Maine an incident happened which shows how much Mr. Hamlin thought of Mr. McKinley at this time. Mr. Blaine, Mr. Hamlin, Mr. McKinley, and others were in the same car, and when McKinley left the group for a moment, Mr. Hamlin spoke up and said, "Mac will be president some day."

"No, sir," put in Blaine, "no man whose name has a 'Mc' to it will ever be President."

The charming feature of this story is the fact that the one who revealed it was President McKinley, who related it to Mrs. Hamlin in the winter of 1897, when she was on a visit at the White House.

The speech which Mr. Hamlin delivered in the Blaine campaign for Representative McKinley might be read with interest in the days of President McKinley. He advocated the doctrine of protection, and predicted that the Democratic tariff policy, whatever it might be, would bring disaster to the nation. He also urged the adoption of a strong and definite foreign policy, on the grounds that it would make for peace and also enlarge American commerce.

Mr. McKinley was reelected, and on November 17, 1884, wrote Mr. Hamlin in part as follows from Canton:—

I thank you most heartily for your congratulations, but I want to say that no man contributed more than you did. You did me good and the party good in this neighborhood. We achieved a splendid victory in the State, but it counts as naught in the general result. We feel awfully here that Mr. Blaine is beaten. It is too bad, too bad. Nothing is left now but to get ready to whip them next time.

I cannot tell you how much Mrs. McKinley and all our friends enjoyed Mrs. Hamlin's visit with them. With many thanks to you for your splendid service in my campaign, and with best wishes for yourself and Mrs. H., believe me,

Your sincere friend,

W. MCKINLEY, JR.

When the presidential election of 1888 drew near, Mr. Hamlin once more looked over the field, and although he took little part in the selection of a Republican candidate, it is of interest that he wrote to public men, advising the nomination of Benjamin Harrison. The following letter from Frederick H. Appleton, son of Chief Justice

Appleton, of Maine, and a leading lawyer of the State, evidences this. Mr. Appleton wrote that his father always spoke of Mr. Hamlin as "a statesman who was conspicuously endowed with the faculty of correctly judging events, who not only clearly read the signs of the times, but who clearly saw what they portended, so that his judgment upon all matters of public concern carried with it great weight and influence. In a letter to my father, I distinctly remember that he advocated Mr. Harrison as the most available Republican candidate for the presidency long before his name appeared in that connection in any of the papers of the day, and my father used to refer to this fact as evidencing his wonderful knowledge of men and his ability to detect long in advance of the public mind their adaptability to the exigencies of the day."

When General Harrison was about to be inaugurated he intimated that he wished Mr. Hamlin to be present. Harrison was the last man Mr. Hamlin saw inducted into the presidency, and he lived long enough to see the wisdom of his party's choice vindicated, and to know that the Harrison administration would pass into history as one of the purest and ablest in the existence of the government. He had admiration and respect for Benjamin Harrison.

Naturally Mr. Hamlin's influence was often sought in behalf of public measures. The last occasion of note when he appeared before a legislative body was in the winter of 1887, when he addressed the legislature of Maine on the abolition of capital punishment — just half a century after he had made his first appeal. This time the movement originated with William Engel, of Bangor, who came to this country a poor boy, and achieved a creditable career in the legislature. He wrote: "It was a fortunate thing for me that when my mind was filled with this cause I met Hannibal Hamlin one morning. To him it mattered but little whether it was a forlorn hope if the cause was right. When justice and humanity appealed to him his sympathies were always aroused. 'Young man,' said he, 'you have a hard fight before you; the legislature is overwhelmingly orthodox; but you have right on your side; try it, and I will help you.' My bill had two thousand signatures. It was referred to the Judiciary Committee, and then our beloved senator spoke. A pin might have been heard to drop while he was speaking. At times his pathos could not have been equaled. His closing words touched all: 'You have honored me a great many times, and in the evening of my life, when the shadows are gathering about me, grant me this; it is all I shall ever ask you. What little time I have left brighten for me, and let me return home with the knowledge that I have not wholly outlived my usefulness, and have in a small measure aided the cause of humanity.' These simple words of Maine's Grand Old Man carried



the day. Although the committee reported against the bill, it passed the legislature by an immense majority."

To the end of his life Mr. Hamlin was called on to intercede for the unfortunate. One incident must suffice. A boy, who was the son of a country postmaster, in a moment of weakness took a small sum of money out of the mail. He was detected, and his father refunded the money. The United States district attorney was compelled, however, to lay the case before the United States grand jury, and the lad was indicted. The boy's record had been good, and as this was his first offense the neighbors sought to have the indictment nol-prossed. The authorities could not do that, and suggested that the Maine congressional delegation ask the President to pardon the young fellow. The affair was placed in the hands of Wesley Harmon, an old friend of Mr. Hamlin. He easily induced the congressional delegation to sign a petition asking for pardon. When he was about to present it, Senator Hale advised him to see Mr. Hamlin, saying: "Mr. Hamlin would have more weight with President Arthur than the entire Maine delegation." Mr. Harmon returned to Bangor, and found Mr. Hamlin in his garden. He heard the case, and replied: "If that boy is locked up behind the bars, it may ruin him for life. If he is pardoned, it may make a man of him. I will write the President." He at once wrote the letter, and Mr. Arthur promptly granted the pardon.

In the years of his retirement, Mr. Hamlin devoted himself to the Grand Army of the Republic. After Logan's death he was described as the old soldier's idol, and was a prominent figure at the national and state encampments. Another writer pictured him at the encampment in Boston, when "the venerable ex-Vice-President rode in an open barouche through the streets, bowing right and left to the plaudits of the crowd," and, sketching other scenes, said, "There was always an eloquence in the man and the occasion, as from adown the long vista of the past — a past marked by some of the most eventful scenes in our country's history — there appeared the figure of this grand old man, amid a burst of applause, his silvery head erect, his keen eyes flashing their olden fire, and anon the clear ring of his clarion voice, as he graphically depicted those momentous events of long ago, 'the most of which he saw, and a part of it he was.'"

Another scene at a camp-fire at St. Louis was pictured by General James M. Lewis: "An ex-Confederate general was one of the committee, and he called on Mr. Hamlin to respond to the toast, The Constitution of the United States. Hamlin arose. He was then seventy-nine years of age, but he did not look over fifty-five. He looked from one person to another, until he had surveyed the whole party, and then burst into a flow of eloquence that drew tears from all present, and surpassed anything I ever heard."

There were many attempts made to induce Mr. Hamlin to write his memoirs. Statesmen, editors, friends, and relatives joined, but in vain. As a last hope his son Charles, in 1886, sent out a circular note to Mr. Hamlin's associates and friends, informing them of his intention to write his father's Life, and asking for his letters. Mr. Blaine became interested in this plan, and gave it his aid in the following thoughtful and suggestive letter of April 3, 1886:—

"I am exceedingly glad you are undertaking this filial duty while your father is in full health and strength, with his mental faculties in full and original vigor. He can impart to you a thousand things which no one could ever give you. If you will accept a suggestion from me, and your father will agree to it, I would strongly advise that he give an autobiography of that early period of his life, say from birth to majority, before any public record was made by him,— incidents of his family, his ancestors, revolutionary traditions, of his boyhood, his school days, recollections of his father and his mother, and of that remarkable body of men of Oxford, of whom his own family constituted a prominent part,— the Livermores, the Benjamins, the Washburns, the Danas, etc. Let him write it just as if he were writing a family and neighborhood letter. He will find a thousand things of interest as soon as he begins to live over again the era of sixty years ago. You could then take the matter up where his professional and public career began."

But, alas! this diplomatic stroke failed to lead Mr. Hamlin out. He came to the conclusion that he did not have the literary habit, and that his memory might cause him to do unintentional injustice to some men. But above this was his unwillingness to talk or write about himself, and he finally said that he should write no memoirs, and would be content with whatever estimate his countrymen might place on his services. He was willing, however, to discuss with his son Charles the principal events in his life, in order that the truth might be recorded should his Life ever be written, and it required many years of careful and adroit questioning to obtain even a modicum of details which form a sauce to the feast of interesting facts. He would eliminate himself as much as he could, and rarely failed on the other hand to go out of his way to speak kindly of the many men he had known in public life. It was rare, too, that he spoke harshly of men or reflected on their characters. It was known that he disliked a certain senator who was once a very prominent figure, but he refused explanation. By accident it was learned that it was believed in the inner circles of the Senate that that man, like Webster, took pay for his services in advocating private bills,— the difference being that Webster thought that it was right, and admitted it, while the other man knew that it was wrong, and was silent.

Mr. Hamlin made only one exception to his rule of declination, and that was to write an historical sketch and estimate of the United States Senate. Whitelaw Reid urged him to write a few reminiscences for the "Tribune," and Charles H. Taylor once offered him one hundred dollars a column to write ten columns of personal matter for the "Globe;" but although the labor involved was comparatively slight, and political friends and opponents united in advising him to contribute a few memoirs, he still refused. Fortunately, he wrote his impressions of Lincoln, and they were saved, although they were only for private inspection. The following short monogram on Lincoln was for Thomas Donaldson, of Philadelphia:—

BANGOR, April 25, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am in receipt of your letter of the 23d instant. You ask me to give you my "impressions of Abraham Lincoln, as to his habits, manners, and personal traits of character." To do so fully would fill a volume. Little can be said in a simple letter. I can therefore give but a very limited reply.

Mr. Lincoln was indeed a very wonderful man; one of the most distinguished of all time and of all nations. In all respects his habits were praiseworthy and unexceptionable. In his habits of business he was systematic and industrious. No man could be more prompt in the discharge of his public duties. In fact, nothing but system, with unceasing toil, enabled him to discharge the almost overwhelming duties that devolved upon him during the war of the rebellion. You and the world know his celebrated habit of story-telling and anecdote. There was no end to it, and every story or anecdote told by him always illustrated and enforced a point with wonderful power and effect. I often thought he sometimes coined them from his own fertile brain for the occasion. And that habit, I am confident, acted as a safety valve to divert his mind, and in a degree to relieve him from the cares and duties upon him.

In his manners he was plain and unassuming. There was no assumed dignity of position. Abraham Lincoln as President was only Abraham Lincoln as a citizen. He was the same in one place, in manner, as in the other. He was tall, angular, and spare in person, without much that might be called polished or fashionable, but he was at all times and in all places a true gentleman.

His marked traits of character were unsullied integrity, great kindness of heart, a devoted love of his whole country, clear convictions of right, and, to use his own language, the courage to follow to the end "the right as God gave him the power to see the right." His name will be cherished in all time as one of the wisest, purest, and noblest of men, and one of the most distinguished benefactors of mankind.



Friend Donaldson, I have thus given you a hasty and brief reply to your request, and very imperfect from its brevity. But you must excuse it and take it as it is.

Yours truly,

H. HAMLIN.

THOMAS DONALDSON, Esq.

Harrison Hume, a well-known Republican of Maine, desired to write an address on Lincoln, and asked Mr. Hamlin for some points. He replied on February 5, 1888, in the following hastily written letter:—

“I go from home to-morrow morning, to be gone a week. I am extremely busy to-day, and I have not possibly the time to give you my views and opinions at length. But I can say briefly that, 1st. The life of Mr. Lincoln is a splendid illustration of the possibilities of our government of all its citizens. Mark his early life, and then his dying in the highest position in the world.

“2d. In his great debate with Douglas he brought himself to national attention, and exhibited great intellectual powers and the first order of statesmanship. That secured his nomination for President.

“3d. *He was President!* With such men as Seward and Chase in the Cabinet, yet his was the superior and controlling mind. He dominated the Cabinet. The Cabinet did not control him.

“4th. The Emancipation Proclamation was *his work*. I saw it, as he said when he showed it to me, before any member of the Cabinet saw it.

“5th. He was a man of great humor. With the terrible responsibility resting upon him he must have relaxation, or he would break down. His wit and humor were his relaxation. They worked like a safety valve to an engine.

“6th. Though without moral or physical fear, his heart was as warm and gentle as a woman's.

“I have hastily stated points in Mr. Lincoln's life. But if I were to discuss them, I should put the Proclamation last, as most important.”

The last days had come, and Mr. Hamlin knew it. But he was never more serene or cheerful. He did not say much, but he radiated affection. His only great-grandchild was a little girl, and no venerable courtier paid more devoted tribute to his queen than he to little Louise. “Her majesty — *my* queen,” he would say, as he welcomed the child and listened to her with a beaming face. Some old opponents, who were also “passing into the sere and yellow,” sought reconciliation, and he gladly gave them his hand. He was ready to

go, and was only thinking of the happiness he could make for others. A movement was started among the Republican politicians of Bangor to prevent the confirmation of the nomination of General Charles W. Roberts for the collectorship of that port. Mr. Hamlin, remembering General Roberts's bravery, wrote his former associate in the Senate, asking as his last request that General Roberts should be confirmed, and it was granted. But in spite of the pathos which naturally surrounded the veteran's declining days, there was a gleam of grim humor occasionally. When Hillman Smith, later warden of the state prison, was a small boy, he was once lost from his home in Hampden. The whole town turned out, and Mr. Hamlin was the one who found him. Many years afterwards, when he was a Union veteran, Smith, then residing in Maryland, wanted to be United States marshal, and asked Mr. Hamlin for a letter to President Harrison. He wrote: "I am not in the habit of giving letters of recommendation to office. But as I once found you when lost, I think you rather belong to me. So I inclose you a letter to the President as an exception to my general rule." To a woman who wanted a lock of his hair, he replied, "I have not enough for myself."

On July 4, 1890, Mr. Hamlin and General Sherman attended the Grand Army encampment at Portland. "General," said he, "you and I will not attend many more reunions." "That's so," replied Sherman. In the following winter Mr. Hamlin had an attack of heart trouble, probably due to his failing physical strength. He said to Dr. Mason, his physician, in his quiet, quaint way, "I thought that I was going over the river that time sure." He was now eighty-one, and premonitions of approaching death decided him on his last important public act, and that was to urge the nation to make Lincoln's birthday a national holiday. The propagation of anarchistic doctrines, the glorification of the lost cause, and the celebration of Jefferson Davis's birthday in some Southern States were the chief considerations which impelled him to this course. He thought that this nation could with profit spend one day in the year demonstrating to the masses the lesson of the Emancipator's life. The perpetuity of a government depended on the character of its citizenship, and knowledge of Lincoln's life was one thing which ought to be brought home to the masses to illustrate the possibilities of American citizenship. In 1887 he wrote a letter to the Republican Club of New York, to be read at its Lincoln dinner, to this end. But his suggestion was too early; and in February of 1891, five months before his death, when his failing strength made travel hazardous, he came to New York to make his last public speech, and pay his last tribute to his friend and associate.

The occasion was the Lincoln dinner given by the Republican Club

at Delmonico's. The scene was thus described by one present : "In all my life I never saw anything that stirred so many emotions and aroused so many memories as when Hannibal Hamlin pleaded with the nation to make Abraham Lincoln's birthday a holiday. I had seen him in many a stirring contest of other days, and remembered him as a rugged giant full of fire and conviction. But when he arose I saw a venerable man, mellowed out, standing at the end of his great and useful life, happy in the approval of his own conscience, and respected by all. He had grown old grandly. He stood before us an anti-slavery leader, one of the fathers of the Republican party, and the trusted friend and counselor of Lincoln. His speech, simple and dignified, ought to pass into our literature as a classic ; and yet cold type cannot breathe again the charm of his personality nor sound out the sweetness of his voice. The audience venerated him and kept the silence of death while he was speaking, except when they had to cheer to relieve their emotions. When he had closed, he left us to go to a reception at the Union League Club. His leave-taking was simple and characteristic. Standing in the doorway of the banquet-hall, with hundreds of men cheering, some weeping, he lifted his hands, and said in a gentle voice : 'Good-by ; God bless you all.' It was like a benediction, and the picture which the old Vice-President presented at that moment can never be effaced from the minds of those who saw it."

The chairman, William Brookfield, said, in introducing Mr. Hamlin :—

"Gentlemen, one of the founders of the Republican party, the friend and associate of Lincoln, the man for whom his fellow-citizens throughout the land entertain an affectionate regard, needs no introduction in a gathering like this. We will have the pleasure of listening to Mr. Hamlin."

Mr. Hamlin replied in part :—

"I came from my home to be with you to-night to do homage to the memory of one of the greatest men the world has ever known. I left my home at the hazard of my health, that I might testify by my presence here in joining with you in paying a tribute to the memory and the worth of Abraham Lincoln. It was for that I came, and not to talk. But I had a thought in my mind which it was my purpose to suggest to this noble club, and I will do it. We speak of Washington as the Father of his Country, and we know that by his Fabian policy the liberties and the independence of these colonies were finally secured. We know the wisdom of George Washington aided in laying deep and strong the foundations upon which our government rests. We know that he aided in launching the old ship of state upon that foundation that has outridden all the storms in the past,



as, in God's name, we trust it will outride all the storms in the future. All honor, then, to George Washington and the commemoration of his name.

"I think, Mr. President, that you have in your by-laws a provision that this day shall be saved to the memory of the birth of Mr. Lincoln. Do you remember that we have incorporated in the statutes of our country one that makes the birthday of George Washington a national birthday? It rests upon no separate articles of political organization, but it rests upon the everlasting law. I have come here to-night, and if I have any power, I would ask it with all the force I can urge, that you join with me in making the birthday of Abraham Lincoln a national birthday. That, in addition to participating with you on this occasion, has brought me here. They are equally entitled to have their birthdays commemorated. Every age has produced its great and distinguished men, the names of some of whom shall never die. In art, in literature, in arms, in the mechanic arts, in everything that serves to aid and elevate the people, the world has produced its great and distinguished men. Abraham Lincoln was not an educated man, but he was a learned man. The world was the school in which Abraham Lincoln graduated. It was not confined to the walls of your colleges and your higher schools. He was educated in the great school of the world. His professors, his tutors, were the men with whom he came in contact in after life, and learned the lesson of humanity which belonged to the world. Such was the school in which Abraham Lincoln was educated. Why, that little gem of a speech which he made at Gettysburg will be taught by our mothers to their children, and it will stand as a gem of English literature in all the ages that shall come. It was a little speech that spoke from the man who was educated in the schools of the world, and it came closer home to the hearts and the firesides of our people. Yes, read carefully the Life of Lincoln, by Nicolay and Hay. They give you a better idea of the early training and the early schooling of that eminent man, and you can learn there how close he was to the hearts of all our people. Was it an education equal to that other school? I will not stop to discuss the question. Undoubtedly the blending of the two would be the desideratum, but which is the better I stand not here to declare.

"One was an education that brought the man home directly to the great mass of our people. They felt it. They felt his words, that would have been cold as the icicle, dropping purely from the educated man of the schools. . . . Now, Mr. President, the time has come when all the bitter asperities that existed against Mr. Lincoln have ceased. The world will say that his birthday should be a national holiday. Had I remained in the Senate to this hour, it would have been done before now. You are a strong, a vigorous, an active, an intelligent,

and purely a Republican party. Now you can put that wheel in motion which shall roll on to success. See to it that the birthday of Abraham Lincoln is made a national holiday. Perhaps I may say that mainly to utter these few words I was induced to come here. Remember, I can see the boys in blue as they tread their solitary rounds in their camping grounds, and I can hear a voice, gentle, but potent to my ear, that commands me from them to regard the memory of Abraham Lincoln as they would have done had God in his inscrutable wisdom changed our relative positions."<sup>1</sup>

The following May, Mr. Hamlin took his farewell from the people of his home. He was still active and every day visited his club; but he expected the summons to another world any moment, and said good-by to his old neighbors when they had gathered together at old Norumbega Hall at a public meeting in honor of merchants' week. There were many calls for him, and he came slowly forward. The great audience divined that he had something unusual to say, and a hush fell over the house as he began:—

"I give you my cordial thanks for this most generous reception. I am not here to speak. You cannot, you do not, expect me to do so. More than eighty years have thinned and whitened my locks, and I stand to-day in the twilight of my age, and the fullness of years folds about me. You do not expect a speech from me. Out of a kind regard for our merchants I said I would testify my respects to them by attending this meeting. We have in Bangor a measure of integrity, and enterprise, and honesty equal to any town in the world. I love the city of Bangor. It has been my home for long years. If I can add a word for her prosperity, if I can say Godspeed, it is a pleasure for me to do so. For that purpose I am here to-night—I may add probably the last time I may ever tread these boards. God bless and prosper our city! God bless you all!"

With this Mr. Hamlin left the platform, and slowly walked down the hall, while the audience, deeply moved, rose and cheered him again and again, while many were touched to tears.

The following fourth of July Mr. Hamlin seemed unusually bright and active. He always enjoyed this day. He walked briskly to the Tarratine Club in the afternoon, to play his usual game of cards with his old friends. He complained once of a pain in his back, but after he had been rubbed a little it passed off and he continued his game. A little while later his head fell on his breast and his hands grasped convulsively over his heart. He was unconscious until physicians

<sup>1</sup> Since Mr. Hamlin originated the movement to nationalize Lincoln's birthday, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Washington have followed the example of Illinois in establishing Lincoln Day by act of legislature.

were called. He asked for his wife and children, and spoke once or twice to them and the physicians. There were hopes for the moment that he would recover ; but the faithful heart was tired out, and soon, on the anniversary of the natal day of the nation he had served so long and loved so well, the old commoner of Maine was gathered to his fathers as a child falls asleep.



## SUPPLEMENT

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JOHN G. NICOLAY TO GENERAL HAMLIN

WASHINGTON, February 24, 1896.

GENERAL CHARLES HAMLIN, Bangor, Maine :

I have received your letter in which you request from me a written statement of the facts within my knowledge relating to the defeat of your father, Vice-President Hamlin, for renomination at the Baltimore convention of 1864; adding that you desire this written statement from me to use in the biography of him, which you are writing and expect soon to publish. I cordially accede to your request for the following reasons :—

About five years ago, on the day after the death of your father, there appeared in the "Philadelphia Times" an editorial alleging as an important revelation of political history that Mr. Hamlin's defeat for renomination for Vice-President at the Baltimore National Convention of 1864 was by the express wish and direction of President Lincoln. The writer of the "Times" editorial stated that he "was a delegate at large from Pennsylvania in the Baltimore convention of 1864, and in response to an invitation from the President to visit Washington on the eve of the meeting of that body, a conference was had in which Lincoln gravely urged the nomination of Johnson for Vice-President." Also that in consequence of this urging he and other Pennsylvania delegates voted against Hamlin. The substance of this editorial was ostentatiously given to the Associated Press, and was printed in leading newspapers throughout the country.

Having in my possession a document in Mr. Lincoln's own handwriting which absolutely disproved the allegation of the "Times" editorial, I promptly on the same day sent a telegram to Mrs. Hamlin in the following words, which was given the same publicity in the Associated Press and newspapers :—

WASHINGTON, July 7, 1891.

MRS. HANNIBAL HAMLIN, Bangor, Me. :

The editorial statement from the Philadelphia "Times" printed in this morning's news dispatches, to the effect that President Lincoln opposed Mr. Hamlin's renomination as Vice-President, is entirely erroneous. Mr. Lincoln's personal feelings, on the contrary, were for Mr. Hamlin's renomination, as he confidentially expressed to me, but he persistently withheld any opinion calculated to influence the convention for or against any candidate, and I have his written words to that effect, as fully set forth on pages 72 and 73, chapter iii., volume 9, of "Abraham Lincoln: A History," by Nicolay and Hay.

Permit me, in addition, to express my deepest sympathy in your and the nation's loss through Mr. Hamlin's death.

JOHN G. NICOLAY.

On the morning of July 9 there appeared a second editorial in the "Times," signed by the initials of Colonel A. K. McClure, the editor-in-chief of that paper, directed to three main efforts: First, to repeat his assertion about his interview with Lincoln, and Lincoln's instructions that Johnson should be nominated; second, inventing a theory to explain away Lincoln's written record that he refused to interfere about the vice-presidency; and, third, violent personal abuse of myself to muddy and obscure the real point of the controversy.

I replied to this second editorial in an open letter of about a column, refuting Colonel McClure's explanatory theory, and adding to Lincoln's written record convincing circumstantial and personal evidence.

Against my reply Colonel McClure printed in the "Times" of July 12 an open letter to me, reiterating his allegations and his explanatory theories, and indulging in yet more offensive personal abuse of myself.

I as in duty bound rejoined in a second open letter, in which I summed up the evidence on my behalf. That ended the controversy on my part, because my position and argument were sufficient.

Up to this time the substance of the discussion on both sides had been telegraphed by the Associated Press, and printed in the leading newspapers. During those few days it excited much public attention, and caused much and very diverse journalistic comment; and what was more important, it called out, by way of interviews and letters, a number of statements by men yet living who had been delegates to the Baltimore convention of 1864, and who had personal knowledge relating to the events under discussion.

The "Philadelphia Times" kept up for a week or two after the main discussion ceased, a desultory fire of small paragraphs directed against myself, and it would appear that Colonel McClure wrote private letters of inquiry to sundry persons; for on August 1 the "Times" printed a supplementary series of letters and extracts which was headed, "Testimony of Leading Political Actors;" and in this the editor grouped and arranged such evidence as in his opinion bore on his side of the fight. But he as conspicuously omitted any notice of the yet more important evidence bearing against him that had been printed by competent witnesses during this same period without any solicitation on my part. I had in the mean time gone away on my summer vacation, and in the quiet and isolated New England village where I was sojourning Colonel McClure's supplement did not fall into my hands for some weeks, for the reason that it was only printed as ordinary newspaper reading matter, and not mentioned in press telegrams. When I did see it I made no reply to it, as I was away from my home and all my memoranda, and because so much time had elapsed that more recent topics of public interest had diverted and absorbed public attention.

Colonel McClure had, however, not yet finished. About a year later, during 1892, he published a book, an octavo volume of 462 pages, entitled "Lincoln, and Men of War Times." In an appendix he printed in full all the discussion alluded to above; that is, his several editorials and my several open letters to him; also the supplementary series, omitting, how-

ever, as before, all new evidence which did not favor his argument; and several chapters in the body of the volume were also in part devoted to a review and restatement of the controversy as he wished it understood, but which I hold to be erroneous.

Now Colonel McClure and I are agreed upon one point. He, in one of his editorials, expressed the belief that this dispute "must lead to the clear establishment of the exact truth as to the defeat of Hamlin in 1864." I believe so, too. But I also think that this "exact truth" cannot be established by his course of omitting important evidence which bears against his contention. As Colonel McClure has appealed from the hot air of ephemeral journalism to the cooler judgment of history, and as, in the ordinary phraseology of debate, he has twice had the "conclusion" on me, once in his supplement and again in his book, it is now fairly my turn; and, discarding his bad example, I shall mention and review all the essential evidence which has come to my notice. I have always intended at some proper time to write such a review, and your request for it, to be used in your biography, renders the time eminently fitting and proper. I am moved to comply with your wish, not alone by my warm personal friendship for your father, and the respect and gratitude due to his character and public services, but also by the higher duty of vindicating the truth of history.

Very truly yours,

JNO. G. NICOLAY.

## REVIEW

### I

When in 1864 the meeting of the Baltimore convention drew near, it was already known that the renomination of President Lincoln was certain beyond a doubt, and contests would only arise upon the vice-presidency and subordinate political strategy. All parties develop rival factions and individual fault-finders in every State; and even in Lincoln's home State of Illinois there were a few "soreheads" who, unable to stem the tide of Lincoln's popularity, had striven to magnify their own local importance by intriguing in committee against a vigorous indorsement of the President in the Illinois State Convention that appointed delegates to the Republican National Convention of 1864.

On Sunday, the 5th of July, I went to Baltimore to attend the convention as a spectator. I was not a delegate, and had no object or mission beyond that of curiosity. My going was not suggested by the President, neither did he object when I informed him of my intention. That being the fifth year of my service as his confidential and official private secretary, I knew I would be questioned about the President's desires. I mentioned this to him, and asked him specially whether he wished me to say anything as to whom he might prefer to have associated with him as candidate for Vice-President.

His answer was that all the various candidates and their several supporters being his friends, he deemed it unbecoming in him to advocate the



nomination of any one of them ; but that privately and personally he would be best pleased if the convention would renominate the old ticket that had been so triumphantly elected in 1860, and which would show an unbroken faith and leadership in the Republican party, and an unbroken and undivided support of that party to the administration and in prosecution of the war.

Having arrived in Baltimore on Sunday afternoon, June 5, I wrote back that same night to my associate, then Major, now Colonel John Hay, as follows :—

. . . "One of the first men I met was B. C. Cook, who stands at the head of our Illinois delegation, and had quite a long and confidential talk with him. He told me he had thought of going to Washington to-morrow, but seeing me he concluded he could sufficiently post himself. He premised by telling me that the milk-and-water Lincoln resolution which was first reported to the Illinois State Convention was cooked up by a few plotters, to the utter surprise and astonishment of nine tenths of the convention, and by only a part of the committee, and was with the others reported to the convention when there was but a small attendance, it being late at night, but that the convention very handsomely repudiated them, and referred them to a new committee, which introduced and passed others of the right stripe. . . .

"Cook says there will be three or four disaffected members in the delegation from Illinois, but that nevertheless the delegation will vote and act as a unit, under the instructions of the convention and also the will of the large majority of the delegation. He says the delegation will in good faith do everything they can for Lincoln ; that is, in arranging the Vice-President, the committee, platform, etc., taking his own nomination of course as beyond question.

"What transpired at home, and what he has heard from several sources, have made Cook suspicious that Swett may be untrue to Lincoln. One of the straws which led him to this belief is that Swett has telegraphed here, urging the Illinois delegation to go for Holt for Vice-President. I told Cook that I thought Lincoln would not wish even to indicate a preference for Vice-President, as the rival candidates were all friendly to him. . . .

"Cook wants to know confidentially whether Swett is all right ; whether in urging Holt for Vice-President he reflects the President's wishes ; whether the President has any preference, either personally or on the score of policy, or whether he wishes not even to interfere by a confidential indication. Also whether he thinks it would be good policy to give the radical delegates from Missouri the seats on their promising to vote for him. Please get this information for me if possible. Write and send your letter by express, so that it will reach me by the earliest practicable hour to-morrow (Monday). This will go to you by express by the seven A. M. train to-morrow, so you ought to have it by ten A. M. Address me at Eutaw House.

"N."

Now it will be seen from this letter of inquiry that I had faithfully reflected Lincoln's wish and policy to express no preference for any candidate. I had not even informed Chairman Cook that I knew what Lincoln's private preference was. I had not written the letter for my own information, because I had had that directly from the President's own lips. I was merely repeating the request of the chairman of the Illinois delegation.

But the chairman's desire to know was not based merely on the question

of the vice-presidency. He wished to understand and be assured whether there was anything in these rumored factional intrigues in the Illinois delegation itself; whether it could be possible that undercurrents existed, or whether marplots, who had given some sign in the Illinois State Convention, would spring a disturbing intrigue upon the deliberations of the National Convention; whether the hoped-for unanimous renomination of Lincoln would be marred by the bickerings of a few malcontent delegates from Illinois.

Colonel Hay received my letter after ten o'clock A. M. on Monday, June 6, and laid it before the President, who immediately indorsed upon it with his own hand a clear and explicit answer to all the questions as follows:—

*"Swett is unquestionably all right. Mr. Holt is a good man, but I had not heard or thought of him for V. P. Wish not to interfere about V. P. Cannot interfere about platform. Convention must judge for itself."*

Cook's question was twofold: First, was Swett true to Lincoln; that is, Lincoln's renomination for President? Second, whether in urging Holt for Vice-President he reflected the President's wishes. Both these questions were answered in the President's indorsement: First, that Swett was unquestionably true to Lincoln's renomination; second, that he had never thought of Holt for Vice-President, and wished not to interfere about Vice-President.

Colonel Hay immediately communicated this answer to me at Baltimore, where I in turn at once gave it to Chairman Cook. The answer was not for my information or guidance or benefit. I was only the medium of transmission. It was the President's personal instruction to the chairman of the Illinois delegation, who was, so to speak, the direct personal representative of Mr. Lincoln in the national convention of the Republican party; and as such representative, and by virtue of his standing and party commission as a delegate, and as chairman of the Illinois delegation, Mr. Cook, on the second day after, renominated Mr. Lincoln as the Republican candidate for President, not, however, until he had made assurance doubly sure. On that same afternoon of Monday, June 6, Cook went to Washington, and heard from the President himself what I had communicated, and, in addition, enough to convince him of Lincoln's real desire, to have the old ticket renominated as a whole.

## II

I quote first of all Chairman Cook's testimony as printed in the Associated Press telegrams under date of July 9, 1891:—

"Mr. Nicolay's statement that Mr. Lincoln was in favor of Hannibal Hamlin is correct. The dispatch which is published this morning was sent to me in reply to an inquiry to Mr. Lincoln in regard to the matter. It read, 'Wish not to interfere about V. P.; cannot interfere about platform; convention must judge for itself.'

"I went to see Mr. Lincoln personally, however. There are always men who say the presidential candidates prefer this man or that, and they do it without the slightest authority. It was so in this campaign. It was reported that Andrew

Johnson was Mr. Lincoln's choice, and it was my business to find out whether it was or not. We were beyond all measure for Mr. Lincoln first, last, and for all time. If he desired Mr. Johnson, he would have been our choice, but he did not.

"As the dispatch indicates, Mr. Lincoln was particularly anxious not to make known his preferences on the question of his associate on the ticket. But that he had a preference I positively know. After my interview with him, I was as positive that Hannibal Hamlin was his favorite as I am that I am alive to-day. The fact is further proven by the action of the entire Illinois delegation, which was a unit for Mr. Hamlin, and, as I stated before, we were at his service in the matter."

In another interview with a different reporter, the account of which appeared on the same day in a special telegram to the "New York Tribune," Mr. Cook repeated the substance of the foregoing in different phraseology; and the reporter put this direct question: "But there is no doubt in your mind, Mr. Cook, that Mr. Lincoln did not favor the nomination of a Southern Unionist?" Mr. Cook's reply was, "None at all. I know he did not. I know he would have been pleased with the nomination of Hannibal Hamlin."

In connection with this testimony of the chairman of the Illinois delegation, I here quote the corroborative evidence of Dr. F. A. Powell, one of the delegates at large from Illinois, an intimate personal friend of Mr. Lincoln, who saw the President both immediately before and immediately after the convention. In an interview printed in the Washington "Evening Star" of July 18, 1891, Dr. Powell states:—

"Mr. Lincoln was not in the remotest degree responsible for the naming of Andrew Johnson as his yoke-mate on that ticket. He neither suggested nor encouraged such action, and I feel justified in saying even that he was probably as much surprised at it as were the members of the Illinois delegation to the convention. That we were surprised I can sincerely testify. I do not mean to say by this that we had not heard it suggested that Mr. Hamlin would be opposed in the convention for renomination, but the movement had not appeared formidable to us, and certainly the name of Andrew Johnson had not come to my ears in connection with it. The attitude of the Illinois delegation in that convention we saw in advance must be a conservative one. We were all personal friends of Mr. Lincoln; we were about to receive, without the shadow of opposition, all that we were asking, the nomination of our favorite, and we felt that for the rest we should not obtrude our wishes on the convention. We wanted the whole work well done, of course, and we felt that that would be accomplished without any particular activity on our part. In taking that position, too, we knew that we would be acting in strict accord with the wishes of Mr. Lincoln, whose position at that time was well understood by all his friends. We thought well of Mr. Hamlin. We believed him to be an honest man and a patriot, and our purpose was to vote for his renomination. . . . We listened respectfully to whatever was communicated to us, but our only reply was an expression of gratitude at the general favor in which Mr. Lincoln was regarded. It was generally known that we would vote for Mr. Hamlin, but we did not parade our intentions, nor seek to influence others to support him."

I next quote the evidence of Mr. Isaac Jenkinson, the editor of the "Richmond (Indiana) Palladium," who was a delegate at large from the State of Indiana, and who printed the following editorial statement in the "Palladium" of July 11, 1891:—



"Whether President Lincoln preferred the nomination of Hannibal Hamlin or Andrew Johnson for the vice-presidency in 1864 would not seem to be of sufficient importance to justify the bitter quarrel now existing between Colonel McClure, of the "Philadelphia Times," and Mr. Nicolay, President Lincoln's private secretary. As a matter of fact, however, we believe Mr. Nicolay is in the right and Colonel McClure in the wrong upon the question. We were a member of the Indiana delegation at the Baltimore convention in 1864, and we distinctly remember that at the convention it was very generally understood that Mr. Lincoln refused to express any choice between the candidates for second place. In company with Judge Kilgore of this State, we made a lengthened call upon President Lincoln the day before the nominations were made, and while the President, in answer to the direct question, frankly said he desired his own nomination, he utterly refused to indicate any preference for the vice-presidency. We do not, therefore, believe he could have really been urging the selection of Johnson. If he were doing so, some one, beside Colonel McClure, at the convention, would have known it; certainly the Indiana delegation, which supported Johnson, would not have been ignorant of the fact."

I next quote the evidence of Mr. Robert Gardner, one of the delegates from the State of California, who, in a letter printed in the "San Francisco Evening Bulletin" of July 13, 1891, makes the following statement:—

"We arrived in Washington early in June, and it was noted by some of the delegation that an effort was being made, looking to the nomination of Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, for Vice-President, instead of Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, the distinguished incumbent of that office, who, for a quarter of a century, had been one of the truest representatives of our Northern type of civilization at the nation's capital. I could not understand why this change in the vice-presidency was being agitated, especially as Johnson was from Tennessee, a State practically out of the Union, without state organization, and the civil war still in progress.

"A few days before the meeting of the Baltimore convention an arrangement was made with William H. Seward, secretary of state, through Thompson Campbell, of our delegation, for the presentation to Abraham Lincoln of the delegates then in Washington. We met at the White House, in the room occupied by the Cabinet, as I remember, Lincoln being present. Not wishing to occupy his valuable time, our interview was brief, but an opportunity was here afforded me to ascertain the President's views on the vice-presidency, which I was anxious to know. In passing out, and while shaking hands, I said, 'Mr. President, we are going to Baltimore to nominate you for President,' and asked the question, 'Have you any preference for Vice-President?' He replied: 'I see no reason for a change.'"

I next quote the evidence of Ex-Governor Wm. M. Stone, delegate from the State of Iowa, and chairman of the Iowa delegation, and who was one of the principal actors in bringing about the nomination of Andrew Johnson, as given in a long interview printed in the Washington "Evening Star" of July 20, 1891. Governor Stone states that he and the Iowa delegates called upon Mr. Lincoln on Monday (June 6, 1864), the day before the Baltimore convention met. Among other things, he says he asked Mr. Lincoln who, in his opinion, would be the most available candidate for Vice-President, and then proceeds:—

"Without directly answering my question, he said that it might be deemed

advisable to select some prominent Union Democrat, in order to encourage that sentiment throughout the country, and satisfy Southern men that the Republican party was not acting altogether upon strict party lines, but was willing to coöperate with any set of men who were willing to assist it in saving the Union. He further said that the loyal element in the Democratic party had rendered us great assistance in their unselfish devotion to the Union, and it was but just that they should be recognized. He then, in about the following order, proceeded to name General Butler, of Massachusetts, Joseph Holt, of Kentucky, General Dix, D. S. Dickinson, and Lyman Tremain, of New York, Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, and some others of lesser note that I am not now able to recall, stating that these men were entitled to recognition, and that by selecting from men of that class we would thereby demonstrate the liberality of the Republican party, encourage recruits from the opposition, and strengthen the cause of the Union. In short, on the highest grounds of expediency, he thought it would be wise to select some so-called Union Democrat for Vice-President. But, as you see, he shrewdly avoided expressing any preference among the number that were named over."

"Governor, did President Lincoln say anything against the renomination of Vice-President Hamlin?"

"He certainly did not, otherwise than by expressing his preference for some Union Democrat. As I have before stated, Mr. Hamlin's name was not mentioned. No, he did not intimate any preference, and I got the impression that he would be satisfied with any one of the gentlemen named. But had I been asked what I thought about his preferences, I would have said they were in the order as named above, beginning with General Butler, and so on. He did not intimate to me any desire for Andrew Johnson's nomination, nor have I ever been under the impression that Mr. Lincoln personally desired his nomination."

Now we have here the evidence of five witnesses, delegates to the convention, who made special inquiry on the point; evidence solid and consistent with Mr. Lincoln's written indorsement, and agreeing with my telegram to Mrs. Hamlin, that Mr. Lincoln positively refused to express any public preference for Vice-President, or to take sides for or against any candidate; and in addition the concurrent testimony of Chairman Cook, Mr. Gardner, and myself that privately and confidentially he preferred Mr. Hamlin. If in his secret heart he had desired Johnson, would he have thus refused the eighty-four votes which the representatives of these delegations as good as offered him?

### III

When my denial of Colonel McClure's allegation was printed, Colonel McClure, finding his assertion thus positively refuted by Mr. Lincoln's written words, in order to justify himself resolved on the desperate expedient of trying to prove President Lincoln's words untrue, and imputing to him the low political manœuvre of deceit and duplicity. In an editorial signed with his initials and printed in the "Philadelphia Times" of July 9, 1891, he began with bitter personal abuse of myself, charging me with ignorance and incompetence, and on the other hand indulging in extreme laudation of himself as enjoying the especial confidence of the President. On this latter point he said:—

"I saw Abraham Lincoln at all hours of the day and night during his presiden-



tial service, and he has himself abundantly testified to the trust that existed between us. . . . In all of the many grave political emergencies arising from the new and often appalling duties imposed by internecine war, I was one of those called to the inner councils of Abraham Lincoln. He distrusted his own judgment in politics, and was ever careful to gather the best counsels from all the varied shades of opinion and interest to guide him in his conclusions; and there were not only scores of confidential conferences in the White House of which John G. Nicolay never heard, but no man ever met or heard of John G. Nicolay in such councils."

I did not then, nor shall I now, pay any attention to his personal abuse. It is an old and stale trick of editors when facts and reason are against them. It is only necessary to state in the briefest way the relations each of us bore to President Lincoln. If a somewhat careful biographical sketch printed in a work entitled "A Biographical Album of Prominent Pennsylvanians" (Philadelphia, 1888) be correct, Colonel McClure was during the presidential term from 1861 to 1865 at various times chairman of the Republican State Central Committee of Pennsylvania; member of the state Senate of Pennsylvania, chairman of its Committee on Military Affairs; adjutant-general of the State, having superintendence of the draft, and editor of the Chambersburg "Repository," a local newspaper. His chief political prominence, however, arose from the fact that he was the party lieutenant of Governor Curtin, who headed one Republican faction of the State, while General Cameron headed the other Republican faction. These two factions about equally divided the Republican strength in Pennsylvania, and were as bitterly hostile and as unceasingly active in their opposition to each other as was possible with maintaining an unbroken party front to the Democrats. It was only through the tact and sagacity of President Lincoln that the Republicans of Pennsylvania were held together at all. The President was equally courteous and generous to Cameron and to Curtin as well as to their respective adherents. In this condition of Pennsylvania politics Colonel McClure did not shine by any representative quality of his own, but only by the light reflected on him as being the confidential friend and factotum of Governor Curtin. The interviews and confidence given him by President Lincoln related to local Pennsylvania matters, and not to national questions; for advice upon those, President Lincoln had his cabinet, his generals, the governors of the loyal States, the Republican senators and members of Congress, and leading politicians and statesmen from the whole loyal North from Maine to California, together with devoted loyal Union leaders from the border States, affording him an array of several hundred official and unofficial advisers, among whom neither Colonel McClure nor myself had any claim, by either years, talent, or experience, to be counted or admitted.

From the above it will be seen that in virtue of his position as chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, as a member of the state legislature, and as adjutant-general, as well as his local editorship, all in the State of Pennsylvania, the official labors and duties of Colonel McClure were localized at Harrisburg, the state capital, and his private occupations



at the town of Chambersburg, where his paper was published ; both of them some hundreds of miles from the city of Washington. On the other hand I was and remained President Lincoln's confidential private secretary, first at Springfield, Ill., from his nomination in 1860 until he went to Washington, and his confidential and official private secretary from his inauguration as President until his death. I had charge of all his papers, and his letters and correspondence passed through my hands. During the whole four years of Mr. Lincoln's presidency, I had a room in the White House and literally lived there day and night, except when absent on a few brief vacations ; and yet Colonel McClure by a bold stroke of the pen assumes and claims to reverse these relative positions, and asks people to believe that he, living and working in distant Pennsylvania and meeting the President possibly in a dozen casual interviews on local Pennsylvania business, knew Lincoln better and enjoyed more of his confidence than the man Lincoln chose to live and work by his side and under his orders, day and night during four long and busy years.

It is quite possible that there were many scores of political conferences of which I knew, and cared to know, nothing whatever ; and it is yet more certain that there were thousands of such conferences of which Colonel McClure was as ignorant as were the Patagonians, for the quite sufficient reason, if no other, that they went on month after month and year after year while he was absent in Pennsylvania, running Pennsylvania politics, making Pennsylvania laws, superintending the Pennsylvania draft, and editing his Pennsylvania local newspaper. For such stations as he held and such service as he rendered he received due consideration ; but when he assumes to have ranked with cabinet officers, governors, generals, and national statesmen, or the President's personal friends, such assumption is ridiculous. When Colonel McClure asserts that by day and by night, in all great crises he was called to the inner councils of Abraham Lincoln, he sets up a claim that refutes itself by its stupendous recklessness and impossibility, and enables the reader to scale down all his other pretensions and statements in a corresponding ratio.

Colonel McClure's next step was to reiterate with hardihood his first assertion. He wrote : —

"I now repeat that, in obedience to a telegraphic request from President Lincoln, I visited him at the White House the day before the meeting of the Baltimore convention of 1864. At that interview Mr. Lincoln earnestly explained why the nomination of a well-known Southern man like Andrew Johnson — who had been congressman, governor, and senator by the favor of his State — would not only nationalize the Republican party and the government, but would greatly lessen the grave peril of the recognition of the Confederacy by England and France."

And in his book published a year later, Colonel McClure again says : —

"I had no personal knowledge of Lincoln's purpose to nominate Johnson for Vice-President until the day before the Baltimore convention met. He telegraphed me to visit Washington before attending the convention, and I did so. He opened the conversation by advising me to give my vote and active support to Johnson as his associate on the ticket."

When I sent to Mrs. Hamlin my telegram contradicting the assertion in its first form, I had no intention, and have none now, to question Colonel McClure's sincerity of belief; but I did then, and do now, question and deny the accuracy of his memory. I have already stated how his assertion is directly contradicted by the highest possible proof, namely, Mr. Lincoln's declaration in his own handwriting, "*Wish not to interfere about V. P. Cannot interfere about platform. Convention must judge for itself*," written by Mr. Lincoln on the very same day, Monday, June 6, on which Colonel McClure fixes his supposititious interview. It was also the same day on which Mr. Lincoln was visited by Chairman Cook of the Illinois delegation; the very same day on which he was visited by Mr. Jenkinson, editor of the "Richmond (Ind.) Palladium," and another of the Indiana delegates; the very same day on which he was visited by ex-Governor Stone and the Iowa delegation, to all of whom he gave the same public answer he had given in his written indorsement, and that he had given to the California delegation a few days before. How could it come about that he would give to all these applications this direct refusal to interfere, and then call and commission Colonel McClure as directly and positively to interfere to secure the nomination of Johnson? What was Colonel McClure's function and power in the Baltimore convention?

He says that he had been chosen first a district delegate and then a delegate at large to the Baltimore convention, and that the latter was at the President's request. Granting this for argument's sake, it is easily explained by Mr. Lincoln's general policy of "holding the balance true" between Cameron and Curtin. But it is a historical fact that the whole presidential movement in Pennsylvania had been managed by Cameron, who had as early as January 14, 1864, obtained the written request of every Union member of the Pennsylvania legislature to Mr. Lincoln to accept a renomination. This movement, inaugurated by Cameron, gathered support and strength in the whole country, and soon rendered Mr. Lincoln's renomination a practical certainty. If Mr. Lincoln had had any need or desire to secure secret manipulation to nominate Johnson, it would have been not only an advantage, but an honorable obligation, to confide that wish to Cameron. He certainly would not have chosen the mere factotum of Curtin under such circumstances. Especially so when, only about a month before the Baltimore convention met, Colonel McClure had been openly accused of party treachery, as the following note shows:—

FRANKLIN REPOSITORY OFFICE,  
CHAMBERSBURG, PA., May 2, 1864.

"SIR,—I have been amazed to see it intimated in one or two journals that I am not cordially in favor of your renomination. I shall notice the intimations no further than to assure you that you will have no more cordial, earnest, or faithful supporter in the Baltimore convention than your obedient servant,

A. K. MCCLURE.

To the PRESIDENT.

Colonel McClure says, as is probably true, that this accusation was unjust; but it shows that he was in no such condition of party confidence

as fitted him to be selected by Mr. Lincoln as the most available agent of a dark and deep political intrigue.

Colonel McClure next invents a theory. He says in his editorial, and repeats in his book, that, when Lincoln wrote his indorsement, "Swett is unquestionably all right," etc., the President was merely throwing me off my guard, so as not to give me "an opportunity to herald Lincoln's sacredly private convictions." Now this theory is absurd, in view of the fact which I have already mentioned, that Mr. Lincoln's indorsement was not written for my benefit, but was the answer to the question specially and urgently sent by Chairman Cook of the Illinois delegation, and was intended to guide the action of the Illinois delegation. It was personally repeated by the President when Chairman Cook visited him, and the direction was implicitly followed by the Illinois delegation, which refused its vote to Johnson until even after Maine had changed its vote to him.

The other branch of the theory is equally fallacious. Colonel McClure says, in his editorial of July 9:—

"I saw and conferred with Swett almost every hour of the period of the convention. We both labored to nominate Johnson, and Swett made Holt, who was an impossible candidate, a mere foil to divide and conquer the supporters of Hamlin. Had Lincoln desired Hamlin's nomination, Swett would have desired and labored for it, and Hamlin would have been nominated on the first ballot."

To show how completely both Colonel McClure's theory and his memory are at fault, I here quote the testimony of Hon. Josiah H. Drummond, who was one of the active Maine delegates in managing Mr. Hamlin's campaign both before and at Baltimore. Mr. Drummond wrote a letter to the "Portland Express" on July 17, 1891, in which he explained that Mr. Hamlin's defeat was owing primarily to the serious defection among the New England delegates. He says on the point here in issue:—

"I was a delegate to the Republican National Convention of 1864. I had very slight personal acquaintance with public men outside of Maine, but I knew Leonard Swett intimately, we having been college class-mates and room-mates, and having kept up a continuous correspondence from boyhood. . . . When the roll was called for the first ballot for Vice-President, Johnson did not have votes enough to nominate him on that ballot, but came so near it that his nomination was a foregone conclusion, and several delegations changed their votes to him; and when he lacked some twenty votes of a majority Simon Cameron changed the vote of Pennsylvania to him, thereby giving him votes enough to nominate him, and Cameron's example was followed very largely, to such an extent that the Maine delegation deemed it their duty to show their acquiescence in Johnson's nomination by changing their vote. I had talked with Cameron upon the question but a few minutes before the ballot commenced. He expressed himself very strongly in favor of Hamlin's nomination, but added that if it was manifest from the first ballot that Johnson would be nominated, he did not deem it wise to prolong the contest; and while the balloting was going on he beckoned me to him, and said that from the vote thrown, it was absolutely certain that Mr. Johnson would be nominated, so that I was not greatly surprised when he arose in his place and gave the decisive vote which it did give.

"Illinois adhered to Hamlin throughout, and utterly refused to change its vote from him until after Maine had changed her vote. I was in constant consultation



with Swett, and I had not then, and never have had since, the slightest reason to believe that he had any knowledge of any views or wishes on Lincoln's part that any other man than Hamlin should be nominated. It is true that Swett told me at the time that Lincoln's position was that he could take no part whatever in the nomination for Vice-President, or, indeed, in any matter that was to come before the convention. If Mr. Lincoln's views were in favor of Johnson's nomination, he concealed them from Swett entirely, as I fully believe. If he did favor the retirement of Hamlin, he must have committed to those not so near to him the task of bringing it about, while concealing his wishes and acts from his closest and most intimate friends. Is this probable? I do not myself believe such was the case."

## IV

I have thus far quoted the direct testimony of six delegates to the convention, and the evidence of every one goes to prove that Colonel McClure is wrong. I will next cite the indirect and circumstantial evidence furnished by the official proceedings of the convention, which, since it does not depend upon memory, but is the historical record made on the spot, is yet more convincing. In his editorial of July 9, Colonel McClure says that after having received the alleged instructions from Mr. Lincoln to bring about the defeat of Hamlin and the nomination of Johnson, "I returned to Baltimore to work and vote for Johnson, although against all my personal predilections in the matter." On the contrary, the official record shows that when the vote was taken for Vice-President the whole Pennsylvania delegation, including Colonel McClure, voted solid for Hamlin.

When this contradiction was pointed out, Colonel McClure amended his explanation as follows : —

"The Pennsylvania delegation was personally harmonious, although divided on Vice-President. In the Pennsylvania caucus an informal vote put Johnson in the lead, with Hamlin second, and Dickinson third. Cameron knew that Hamlin's nomination was utterly hopeless, and he accepted the result without special grief. He urged a solid vote as a just compliment to Hamlin, and it was given with the knowledge that it could not help Hamlin, and that a solid vote for Johnson would follow."

And again he writes in his book : —

"I supposed that Cameron was sincerely friendly to Hamlin, and would battle for his renomination, until he finally proposed to me, the night before the convention met, that we give a solid complimentary vote to Hamlin, and follow it with a solid vote for Johnson."

The reader will note that in the first extract Cameron is represented as having "accepted the result without special grief," — that is, with some grief, — and in the second as having "proposed" the result. But with what surprising expertness, as if they were juggler's balls, Colonel McClure also tosses probabilities about. He would have us believe that Lincoln had sent for him, pleaded with him, depended upon him as the one man who could and must defeat Hamlin; and that twenty-four hours later he (McClure), forgetting or neglecting these instructions, readily consented to this "complimentary" vote to Hamlin, thereby incurring at least the pos-

sibility of his being nominated, and thwarting the alleged eager desire and instruction of the President. This is certainly trifling with argument.

But the official record of the proceedings also makes it quite evident that no such understanding existed with Cameron. There was no reason why the Pennsylvania delegation should merely compliment a Maine statesman. And Cameron on his part was much too astute a politician to throw away the fifty-two votes of Pennsylvania on an unnecessary compliment to a candidate from Maine, if he wanted to give sure success to a candidate from Tennessee. Cameron doubtless knew what Mr. Lincoln wanted, and accordingly he took somewhat extraordinary pains to nominate Mr. Hamlin. He did not even wait until the subject of the vice-presidency was reached. As soon as a motion had been made to proceed to nominations for President, Cameron moved the adoption of the following substitute:—

“*Resolved*, That Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, be declared the choice of the Union party for the President, and Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine, be the candidate for Vice-President of the same party.”

If the Pennsylvania caucus had “put Johnson in the lead” it would not have allowed this motion to be put in this way. If Cameron had desired the success of Johnson, he would not have made such a motion. If Colonel McClure had been instructed to defeat Hamlin, he would have objected to this course of proceeding. Neither can it be explained on any theory of a “complimentary” vote. A compliment to Hamlin had no need to be coupled with an acclamation vote for Lincoln. It was clearly intended by Cameron to make sure, even in a measure to force an immediate renomination of the old ticket of 1860 through the all-pervading enthusiasm for Lincoln.

There was great applause by one portion of the convention, and loud ones of “No, no” by another portion. A Maryland delegate called for a division, and then the chairman of the Iowa delegation, ex-Governor Stone, who was the most active among the Johnson followers, moved to lay the substitute upon the table. The motion was put *viva voce*, and the presiding officer declared it carried.

If the Pennsylvania delegates had intended a mere compliment, a mere deception to conceal a deep-laid intrigue, here was a chance to carry out that deception by dropping the matter. On the contrary, Thad. Stevens, of the Pennsylvania delegation, and others called for a vote by States on the tabling motion, insisting that he had done so before the presiding officer announced its adoption. A parliamentary wrangle then sprang up which lasted at least half an hour; and all this time Colonel McClure sat dumb, and said no word to carry out what he claims to have been secret and urgent instructions from President Lincoln to defeat Hamlin. The circumstantial evidence is overwhelming that he received no such instructions.

The confusion was finally quieted by Cameron withdrawing his substitute on repeated and urgent request from many delegates; and then Chairman Cook of the Illinois delegation nominated Abraham Lincoln for President, which the convention confirmed by a regular roll-call and ballot.

When this business was out of the way nominations for Vice-President were declared in order. Indiana presented and Iowa seconded the name of Andrew Johnson, and then Cameron once more arose and said: "I am instructed by the State of Pennsylvania to present the name of Hannibal Hamlin for Vice-President." Here was a second or third chance for Colonel McClure to say or do something in execution of his alleged instructions to defeat Hamlin. But again he sat dumb; and when the vote was taken Cameron cast the whole 52 votes of Pennsylvania (including Colonel McClure) for Hannibal Hamlin.

This first ballot was the decisive vote. There was no second ballot. Almost every delegate and every spectator in the hall kept a tally-sheet and put down the vote of each State as it was called. When the roll-call had been completed, and while the secretaries were making up their official footings, long before any result whatever had been announced by the chair, delegates and spectators knew from their own memoranda that Johnson had received 200 votes, Hamlin 150, Dickinson 108, with the remainder scattered among seven other names. This showed the preponderating drift of sentiment, and still, before any result had been announced, delegations began changing their votes. Kentucky changed 21 votes from Rousseau to Johnson. Oregon changed 6 votes from Colfax to Johnson. Kansas changed 4 scattering votes to Johnson. Then Cameron, seeing the inevitable drift and feeling, changed the 52 votes of Pennsylvania to Johnson, which was followed by a similar change of New Jersey, and then by Maine herself, while Illinois did not change until six other States had done so.

Now if we analyze the first ballot, before any changes began, while it is plain that several different influences contributed to defeat Hamlin, it is obvious that the attitude of New England alone was sufficient of itself to cause it. New England gave Hamlin 26, Johnson 18, and scattering 34. If this whole New England vote had been given solid for Hamlin, it would have diminished Johnson's total to 182 and raised Hamlin's to 202. That would have shown a popular drift to Hamlin, and have insured his success, for changes would have followed as rapidly to him as they did to Johnson.

## V

Thus far it will be seen Colonel McClure has dealt only in assertion based on his memory or imagination, unsupported by any word, letter, or dot of record evidence. But realizing the insecurity of this attitude, he, as already stated, printed about a month after our short newspaper controversy a collection of extracts and letters, to which he gave the heading "Testimony of Leading Actors." In this he grouped together the names of Hamlin, Butler, Cameron, Sickles, Jones, Truman, Lamon, and Pettis; seeking thus to make an impression on people who only read headlines. I shall show that the prominent and weighty names in this list say nothing which is pertinent to the question, and that the alleged testimony of those who assume to speak to the point refutes itself upon mere analysis.



The question at issue is : Did Mr. Lincoln in a confidential interview on Monday, June 6, 1864, instruct Colonel A. K. McClure to bring about the defeat of Hamlin and the nomination of Andrew Johnson?

1st. He quotes a letter from Mr. Hamlin, saying that somebody in the year 1889 convinced him that Mr. Lincoln had caused his defeat. Now it is only necessary to say that whatever Mr. Hamlin may have momentarily thought in 1889 is no proof of what Mr. Lincoln did in 1864. The fact that Mr. Hamlin had disbelieved such silly stories a whole quarter of a century is a mountain of inferential evidence on the other side.

2d. He quotes from statements made by General Butler and General Cameron to the effect that the latter was sent by Mr. Lincoln in March, 1864, to offer to the former the candidacy for Vice-President. Without stopping to discuss the probability of these statements made from memory, one ten, and the other twenty-one years after the event, it is enough to say that whatever Mr. Lincoln may have thought or done three months before the presidential nominations is no proof that on the day before the meeting of the convention he instructed Colonel McClure to defeat Hamlin and nominate Johnson.

3d. Under the heading "Jones speaks for Raymond," he quotes a letter from Jones to say that Raymond had often talked to him about the vice-presidential contest, and that from such information he (Jones) thought Colonel McClure's statements correct. This upon the merest inspection is seen to be, 1st, a blanket answer to a blanket question. 2d. That it is hearsay evidence and therefore inadmissible. 3d. That it makes no pretense to any specific knowledge about Colonel McClure's alleged interview with Lincoln on June 6, 1864.

4th. Next he quotes from an article of ex-Secretary Welles in the "Galaxy Magazine," where Mr. Welles says :—

"The question of substituting another for Vice-President had been discussed in political circles prior to the meeting of the convention, without any marked personal preference, but with a manifest desire that there should be a change. Mr. Lincoln felt the delicacy of his position, and was therefore careful to avoid the expression of any opinion; but it was known to those who enjoyed his confidence that he appreciated the honesty, integrity, and self-sacrificing patriotism of Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee."

This extract is also utterly irrelevant as to Colonel McClure's alleged interview with Lincoln on June 6, 1864. The direct statement in the quotation, so far from proving the instruction which Colonel McClure claims was given him, shows that Mr. Lincoln refused to interfere for or against any candidate.

5th. He next quotes what he calls General Sickles's statement. This, however, contains nothing except an opinion about the newspaper controversy. General Sickles says: "The President never said to me that he favored Mr. Johnson as against Mr. Hamlin, nor did he discuss political matters with me." And Colonel McClure distinctly says in his book: "The question of nominating Johnson for the vice-presidency was never suggested or even intimated to Sickles."

From the foregoing it will be seen that these five prominent names were dragged into the discussion merely for their effect in headlines, and that they contribute nothing to solve the question at issue. I now come to the three remaining witnesses of Colonel McClure.

The first of these was Major Ben. C. Truman, who wrote to Colonel McClure from Chicago under date of July 25, 1891. The pith and substance of what Truman states in this letter is the following :—

“I was private secretary of Andrew Johnson in Nashville in 1864. I saw and handled all his correspondence during that time, and I know it to be a fact that Mr. Lincoln desired the nomination of Johnson for Vice-President. . . . I do not know that General Sickles conferred with Johnson on the subject, and it is possible that General Sickles was not advised by Lincoln at the time he sent him on the secret mission what he had in view ; for Lincoln may at that time have been undecided in his own mind. It is certain, however, that after General Sickles returned and reported to Lincoln, Lincoln decided to favor the nomination of Johnson.”

This testimony is not only useless because of its vagueness and its weakness in other respects, but is rendered worthless by the fact that Truman two weeks earlier had written a letter to the “New York Times,” printed in its issue of July 13, 1891, in which he told an altogether more circumstantial and entirely-different story, namely: That he, Truman, returned from the battles of Resaca (which occurred May 13-16, 1864) to Nashville. That a correspondent of the “New York Herald” told him that Sickles was there to see whether Johnson “would be an available candidate for Vice-President, in case there was a movement in favor of a war Democrat.” Truman continues: “I made haste after dinner to acquaint Johnson with what I had heard, and he informed me that Maynard and Brownlow had already set the ball rolling. . . . Mr. Johnson then asked me to go to Philadelphia or Washington and see what Colonel Forney thought about it.” That he went to Washington, and called on Mr. Lincoln ; and in addition to other conversation he says :—

“I also told Mr. Lincoln that I thought Mr. Johnson would like to be a candidate for Vice-President on the ticket with him. . . . The President seemed deeply interested in what I said, but made no reply ; at least I do not feel like saying he did, when I cannot remember just what he did say. I am sure, however, he did not tell me what Sickles was in Nashville for, and no name was mentioned in connection with the Vice-President but Johnson’s, and that name was mentioned by myself. But I retired, believing that Mr. Lincoln was a mighty good friend of Johnson’s.”

Thus Truman’s vague assertion of July 25 is effectually disposed of by his prior and circumstantial statement of July 11, that it was not Lincoln, but Johnson, who was pulling wires ; and because Lincoln listened patiently and refused him any satisfaction or information, Truman *believed* (did not *know*) that “Lincoln was a mighty good friend of Johnson’s.” With this candid explanation on his own part, Mr. Truman can be allowed to stand aside as a witness. And it must not be forgotten that the whole of this has no relevancy whatever to the exact question whether Lincoln, on the 6th of June, 1864, the eve of the meeting of the Baltimore convention, in a



private interview, commissioned Colonel A. K. McClure to defeat Hamlin and nominate Johnson. His statement of July 25, "*I know* it to be a fact that Mr. Lincoln desired the nomination of Johnson for Vice-President," is annulled by his confession of two weeks earlier, that he knew nothing whatever about it, but only "*believed*" that Lincoln was "a mighty good friend of Johnson's."

The next of these three witnesses is Marshal W. H. Lamon, who, in a letter to Colonel McClure, dated August 16, 1891, among other things, wrote the following:—

"I recall to mind the fact that Mr. Lincoln sent, for you, Mr. Editor, the day before the national convention was to meet, for consultation on this veritable subject. To the best of my recollection, you were not in sympathy with the scheme; that you opposed it, and declared yourself in favor of the old ticket of 1860; and I am confident that at first you were opposed to the nomination of Johnson. But after some discussion, and hearing Mr. Lincoln's earnest reasoning in favor of his position, you yielded your prejudices and seemed convinced that there was philosophy and perhaps sound politics in the proposition. The late lamented Leonard Swett, of Illinois, was also sent for and consulted before the convention met; Mr. Lincoln always had great faith and confidence in Mr. Swett's political wisdom. The proposition took Swett by surprise. He had made up his mind that the old ticket of Lincoln and Hamlin would be again renominated as a matter of course. Swett said to him, 'Lincoln, if it were known in New England that you are in favor of leaving Hamlin off the ticket it would raise the devil among the Yankees (Mr. Swett was born in Maine), and it would raise a bumble-bee's nest about your ears that would appall the country. . . . Lincoln was serious, earnest, and resolute. He produced arguments so convincing to Swett that he shortly became a convert to the proposed new departure, and in deference to Mr. Lincoln's wishes he went to the convention as a delegate from Illinois and joined Cameron, yourself, and others in supporting Johnson. I recollect that Swett asked Mr. Lincoln, as he was leaving the White House, whether he was authorized to use his name in this behalf before the convention. The reply was, 'No; I will address a letter to Lamon here, embodying my views, which you, McClure, and other friends may use if it be found absolutely necessary. Otherwise it may be better that I should not appear actively on the stage of this theatre.' The letter was written, and I took it to the convention with me. It was not used, as there was no occasion for its use, and it was afterwards returned to Mr. Lincoln, at his request."

It must be added in this connection that Colonel McClure not only quotes this testimony in his appendix, but comments upon it in the text of his book, and approves and indorses it as good evidence.

I need not here waste time and space to set forth the fact that Marshal Lamon had neither the capacity nor the prudence to be intrusted with such a mission, especially if a capable man like Swett were present. In his younger and better years Lamon had been a warm friend of Lincoln, whom the President valued for certain qualities of cheerful companionship and strong personal devotion. Lamon himself writes in a little book of reminiscences recently published by his daughter, that he was sent to Washington by Lincoln's friends in the capacity of a personal body-guard. Being a man of herculean strength and unflinching courage, he would at any moment gladly have given his life to save that of the President.



In Lamon's later years, however, his character and temper had become so changed by disappointment and disease that he took an attitude of cynical jealousy and insidious depreciation of the President, and downright unfriendliness to Mr. Lincoln's friends. This is not the first recklessly untrustworthy reminiscence of this character which Lamon wrote during the evening of his days. The absurd inconsistency of this long rambling story comes out when we compare the date of its alleged happening with other testimony mentioned in this review. Lamon says it was the day before the meeting of the convention — that is, on Monday, June 6, 1864 — that this interview occurred, and the alleged letter to him was written. It was on this same Monday, June 6, that Mr. Lincoln wrote his indorsement, the original of which lies before me: "Wish not to interfere about V. P." It was on this same Monday, June 6, that the President reiterated this declaration to Chairman Cook, of the Illinois delegation, and to Chairman Stone, of the Iowa delegation.

This single quotation from Lamon's letter shows how recklessly he made his inventions to fill his momentary need of argument without regard to the exigencies of time and circumstance. In one sentence he writes as if Swett had been summoned alone; in another as if it were the joint interview of Lamon, Swett, and McClure with the President — which indeed is the dominating inference from the recital. So also he says Swett was taken by surprise, and combated the proposition to abandon Hamlin, when by other evidence (and upon which Colonel McClure insists with equal pertinacity) Swett had been telegraphing to Baltimore a day or two earlier to urge the nomination of Holt. Most preposterous, however, is Lamon's declaration, insisted upon as true evidence by Colonel McClure, that on the day on which Lincoln wrote the indorsement for Chairman Cook, Lincoln also wrote the letter for Marshal Lamon, — one saying, "Wish not to interfere about V. P.," and the other urging the nomination of Johnson; — the bald inconsistency that Lincoln on the same day put down in cold writing this direct contradiction of his wishes, both to be sent to Baltimore, where on the following and succeeding day these two contradictory pieces of manuscript might happen to be exhibited to the same delegates or read to the same caucus. — And this is Colonel McClure's idea of Lincoln's political sagacity, shrewdness, and method of secret combination! A more ridiculous aspersion, and a more bungling hypothesis, was never put before the public.

Colonel McClure's third witness is Judge S. Newton Pettis, who in a letter written under date of July 20, 1891, makes the following statement: —

"On the morning of the meeting of the Baltimore convention in 1864 which nominated Mr. Lincoln, and immediately before leaving for Baltimore, I called upon Mr. Lincoln in his study, and stated that I called especially to ask him whom he desired put on the ticket with him as Vice-President. He leaned forward, and in a low but distinct tone of voice said, 'Governor Johnson, of Tennessee.'"

To my mind, the very boldness, bluntness, and positiveness of this asser-

tion is evidence that it is incorrect. It shows no reason for being. Neither the official proceedings of the convention, nor the official list of delegates, contains Judge Pettis's name. He does not claim to have been a member, nor to have had anything to do with it. He states no object in asking Mr. Lincoln such a question, nor any reason why Mr. Lincoln should "lean forward" and answer "in a low voice." In view of the evidence I have arrayed, this assertion belongs to the same class as the letter from Lamon and the original statement by McClure. They are evidently nothing but the joint product of treacherous memory and eager imagination. Granting that they were written in the utmost sincerity of belief a full quarter-century after the incidents are imagined to have occurred, such sincerity of belief, contradicted as it is by both record and circumstantial evidence, forms no proof of fact. Upon the evidence I have presented, confirmed by Mr. Lincoln's own handwriting now in my possession, intelligent minds will always condemn as error the assertion, though it be a thousand times repeated, that Abraham Lincoln was the cause of Hannibal Hamlin's defeat for renomination as Vice-President.

No reason existed why Mr. Lincoln should do such a thing. Mr. Hamlin performed his official duties as Vice-President with zeal and ability. He was a consistent Republican, a faithful Unionist, an earnest supporter of the administration and the war. An intimate personal friendship was maintained between him and the President. He was a frequent visitor and adviser at the White House. No intimation of either secret or open opposition from him to Mr. Lincoln's renomination ever came to my knowledge. He supported Mr. Lincoln's second election with as much zeal as he did the first. And that this friendship and good-will was mutual is proven by Mr. Lincoln's confidential declaration to both Chairman Cook and myself that he hoped again to have Mr. Hamlin associated with him on the presidential ticket of 1864.

JNO. G. NICOLAY.

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JOHN HAY TO GENERAL HAMLIN.

800 SIXTEENTH STREET, LAFAYETTE SQUARE,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., February 22, 1898.

DEAR MR. HAMLIN, — I have your letter of the 20th. Mr. Nicolay has made so full and complete a statement of all the matters referring to your father's intimate relations with President Lincoln, and to Mr. Lincoln's wish for your father's renomination, that it seems altogether unnecessary for me to write anything additional — further than to say that everything Mr. Nicolay has written has my full concurrence, so far as my knowledge extends of the subject under discussion; and that I believe him to be absolutely correct in his statement of those matters of which I was not personally cognizant.

Yours very truly,

JOHN HAY.

## MAJOR ALBERT E. H. JOHNSON TO GENERAL HAMLIN.

WASHINGTON, D. C., January 15, 1897.

GENERAL CHARLES HAMLIN, Counselor at Law, Bangor, Maine :

*My dear General,* — The published interview with me by the "New York Evening Post," on the subject of the Lincoln-Hamlin-Johnson controversy, to which you refer, is correct in the statements referring to President Lincoln when soliloquizing on the telegram announcing the nomination of Governor Andrew Johnson for Vice-President, and Mr. Stanton's preference for the old ticket, — Lincoln and Hamlin.

The telegraph office in the War Department was next to the Secretary's room, with communicating doors, and that telegram came in the afternoon of the 8th of June, 1864, while the President was there. After the President had left the department, Mr. Charles A. Tinker, the operator who received the telegram, came into the Secretary's room and told me that the President had just read the telegram of the nomination of Mr. Johnson for Vice-President, and that he said, "Well, I thought possibly he might be the man. Perhaps he is the best man, but" —

At the time Mr. Stanton was not in his office, and when he came I told him what Mr. Tinker had said. He said nothing, but walked the room for a while with bowed head.

The words of the President were the talking of a man to himself, something which would inevitably seek out its suitable expression. It was not the expression of gladness, of relief, of satisfaction, of approval, at what had been accomplished by alleged intrigue. It was not the expression of hopefulness that he would be benefited by it in a political sense.

It had been published at that time that the President wanted a Unionist Democrat from an insurgent State on the grounds of expediency; and it has since been published that the President gravely urged the nomination of Mr. Johnson in deference to the national and international necessities that the Vice-President should be taken from the South.

Mr. Stanton during the war had little confidence in Southern Unionists, and there were few, if any, persons in the War Department who did have this confidence. About seven tenths of the officers of the army from the South and nearly all the West Point graduates from the South turned against the government, and the War Department officials did not want a Southern man in position in any contingency to take the place of the President in that fearful struggle of the government for existence.

The President and Vice-President were nominated in the afternoon of June 8, 1864, and the only telegram the President received before this was from Colonel Ward H. Lamon at nine p. m. on the 7th, saying, "Up to last night Hamlin favorable for Vice; now And. Johnson ahead." Colonel Lamon, history tells, was certainly trusted by President Lincoln, and he went direct from the President to Baltimore. His telegram to the President seems to convey the impression that he wanted the President to know that Vice-President Hamlin was ahead for the nomination up to the night of the 6th, and that it was only on the night of the 7th that Colonel Lamon



deemed it best to advise the President of the change. Colonel McClure, as I have read, states that the President sent for him at Baltimore the day before the meeting of the convention, to come to the White House, and that the President earnestly told him then and there that he wanted Governor Johnson nominated. This was on the 6th, and Colonel McClure at once returned to Baltimore. But he sent no telegram to the President that Mr. Johnson was ahead, or that he would be nominated, or that he was nominated. Nor did any person know that Colonel McClure held this secret of the President until the death of Mr. Hamlin. Compare this alleged intriguing of that marvelously just man with his soliloquizing in the telegraph office when he was advised of the nomination, and the intrigue is without substance.

Moreover, the President's soliloquy is in perfect harmony with the facts as given by his historians, — his confidential secretaries, — that he did not wish to interfere with the nomination of the Vice-President, and which fact he wrote for Mr. Nicolay probably the very day Colonel McClure states he was summoned by the President at the White House to go back and tell the delegates that a Southern Unionist, in the person of Governor Johnson, was his choice. Nor was it then known by the convention that Colonel McClure so declared to any of the delegates.

I read during the McClure-Nicolay controversy, which went the rounds of the press a few years ago, that a newspaper man said that before the Baltimore convention he went from Washington to take charge of the "Pittsburg Commercial," which he said was a Stanton paper, and that what Stanton said was considered as the utterance of President Lincoln himself. That his position was to advocate and favor a Democrat and Southern Union man for Vice-President, and that Stanton had announced Governor Johnson as the President's choice. In this about Mr. Stanton there is not one word of truth. Mr. Stanton was in favor of the old ticket, — Lincoln and Hamlin, — and he did not believe the convention would change that ticket, and I heard him so state a number of times. He never said a word in favor of Governor Johnson for the nomination, nor in favor of any Southern Unionist for Vice-President, and when I told him of the President's comment on the nomination I could then see him looking forward to the blade, then to the ear, then to the full corn of trouble. This was his experience in the Cabinet of President Johnson.

On that morning when Mr. Stanton summoned the Cabinet and Chief Justice Chase, at the ceremony which was to turn over the government to Vice-President Johnson, Mr. Stanton there saw, uninvited, two distinguished politicians — both Southern Unionists. These were Mr. Stanton's enemies, and they followed him as an illusion of the spectre of the trouble he saw in the White House, when I told him of Mr. Johnson's nomination and the soliloquy of the President thereon.

This Cabinet meeting was held in the room in which the President died and it resulted in a communication from Secretary Stanton to Vice-President Johnson advising him that his inauguration was desired at the earliest possible moment, and asking him to state the place and time at which the ceremony should be performed.

At eleven o'clock the ceremony took place in the Vice-President's room at the Kirkwood House, and among those present in that room were two distinguished politicians, — F. P. Blair, Sr., and Montgomery Blair, both famous in history as great political workers. After the ceremony the President received the expressions of all present for his health and safety.

At that solemn moment, when the existence of the republic was the issue, he said : "The duties of the office are mine ; I will perform them — the consequences are with God. Gentlemen, I shall lean upon you ; I feel that I shall need your support. I am deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion and the responsibility of the duties of the office I am assuming."

There were about twelve persons present, and it is a singular coincidence that of them these two distinguished politicians were the only ones whom he finally selected to lean upon for support. The presence of these gentlemen seems prophetic, and in the distance they saw the fulfillment of plans conceived when, at the second inauguration of President Lincoln, they took Vice-President Johnson from the senate chamber in a deplorable condition to their home at Silver Spring.

As Secretary Stanton alone gave all the directions, it was noted, at the time, that within about two and one half hours his bitterest enemies were present at the ceremonies ; and how they came to be there was a question.

Mr. Stanton, in carrying into effect the order to arm the colored men into regiments, which your father brought him from President Lincoln, in March, 1863, directed the adjutant-general of the United States army to go forth from the office and organize these regiments. For this General Thomas hated Mr. Stanton and looked forward for revenge. He got it through President Johnson, and Mr. Stanton then saw the full corn which he had darkly seen in the unfinished soliloquy of the President.

The President's comment on the nomination was considered then as being too serious a matter to be repeated as coming from the War Department, and it never got into the press until Colonel McClure's disclosure of the alleged part he took as the confidant of President Lincoln in the nomination of Governor Johnson.

As corroborating evidence that President Lincoln did speak out suddenly the very words which Mr. Tinker has given and of which he told me at the time, I have just received the confirmation of Colonel Albert B. Chandler, who was at that time one of the operators in the telegraph office and now president of the Postal Telegraph-Cable Company of New York. In his letter to me he says : "Referring to your letter of yesterday's date, January 11, I well remember about the telegrams you mention. It happened to fall to Mr. Tinker to deliver them to Mr. Lincoln, and I think there was no one except Mr. Tinker present at that time of Mr. Lincoln's soliloquy, referring to the nomination of Mr. Johnson, when he said, ' Well, I thought perhaps he might be the man, and perhaps he is the best man, but ' —

"Mr. Tinker told me the circumstances at the time, and it is my recol-

lection that the messages were sent by Mr. Nicolay. I think it very probable that no copies were made of these messages.

"Thinking you may not have written Mr. Tinker, I have forwarded your letter to him, and have no doubt you will hear from him direct."

Whatever the precise words of the President, whatever his manner of utterance, whatever his manner of leaving the room at the moment of such utterance, one thing is certain, — he did not like the nomination of Mr. Johnson. He was not pleased, and this is what I told Mr. Stanton about an hour after Mr. Tinker told me, and I distinctly understood Mr. Tinker to tell me the words I have quoted, and these I repeated to Mr. Stanton.

I have also read that the President recanted his determination not to interfere, and that he did say that he wanted Mr. Johnson; but the concurrent testimony of the President himself, of Mr. Tinker, Mr. Chandler, and myself, is that the very last words of the President conclusively show that he never recanted his determination not to interfere. His last words about the nomination meant that it was a leap in the dark, and unmistakably show that he did not favor Mr. Johnson.

Whatever the great Secretary's suspicions of General Thomas's loyalty to the government were based upon I never knew, but he was so intensely and tyrannically set against persons who wanted to save the Constitution at the expense of the government and the country, that he could not tolerate any person near him against whom the suspicion of Southern sympathy rested. While I believe that the work performed by General Thomas of putting the blacks of the South in the Federal army was distasteful to him, — was not congenial to his feelings, — he did this work faithfully and did a great work for the army and for the nation. He put in the army nearly a hundred thousand blacks from the South, officered and armed. But how strange the change. When Mr. Stanton wanted to retire General Thomas, President Johnson took that occasion to give Mr. Stanton a marked snubbing in the Cabinet. He refused to retire General Thomas and used him to retire Mr. Stanton.

In the President's soliloquy did he see this change?

In his conclusion of the choice of the Baltimore convention, what did he mean?

Referring to your father's renomination, I have heard Mr. Stanton speak of the matter as not being a question of the expediency of a change, but that it was more a question of safety against contingencies that no man could foresee.

I am, dear sir, your obedient servant,

A. E. H. JOHNSON.

CHICAGO, 22 April, 1896.

DEAR GENERAL HAMLIN, — I am indeed sorry that I cannot answer your note in a way to satisfy myself. Up to almost the end of the war I was a student at Harvard, and I saw next to nothing of my father in Washington, but I distinctly recall that he, in speaking of your father, always spoke of him as a friend in a different way from his reference to many others.



I knew your father then, but only as a lad could know the Vice-President. I had grown up from childhood familiar with my father's political contests, and I knew of course that your father was a veteran in public life and had been one of the first to resist the encroachments of the slave power, and that his whole heart, as was my father's, was in the cause. In after years, as time made the disparity in our years less, I came to know him better personally and to have a great affection for him. In his plain, sturdy uprightness he seemed to me to be an ideal American, and there is a solidity and endurance in the regard in which he is held by all that must be most gratifying to you as his son.

Believe me, my dear friend, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT T. LINCOLN.

### MR. HAMLIN'S RECORD AS COLLECTOR OF THE PORT OF BOSTON

JOHN FISKE, for many years deputy collector of the Boston custom-house, wrote May 19, 1898:—

"His term of office, though brief, was long enough to demonstrate the wisdom of the administration in its choice. He filled the collectorship with dignity, ease, and becoming grace. To his subordinates he was always affable, considerate, and kind, and won from all their confidence and regard. He was quick to comprehend and ready to fathom the complications and intricacies of the revenue system. His decisions were, as a rule, sound, and rarely were they overruled by the Treasury Department. He had strong firmness of character, and when once he had made up his mind on any question he had duly considered, no blandishments could move him.

Of all his qualities of head and heart, that which always impressed me most and which seemed to me to be the secret of his great success all through his busy life, was his plain common sense, — a gift as valuable as it is rare. No wonder, therefore, that at the close of his brief term of office he carried with him into his voluntary retirement the respect of the mercantile community, and the esteem and good-will of his subordinates, who presented him with a silver service as a token of their regard. The policy of the administration he could not indorse, and, true to his political antecedents, he refused to give it acquiescence."

### FORMATION OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN MAINE

FOLLOWING the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in May, 1854, earnest anti-slavery men gathered almost simultaneously in Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New York, and other States, to form a constitutional anti-slavery party. The fact that organization was effected in the interest of a new political party in so many different localities, at nearly the same

time, evidences the truth that the Republican party was of national rather than local origin, and had its birthplace in the Northern heart. The question of priority of organization subsequently interested the historians, and their opinion is that the first important body of anti-slavery men formally to meet as Republicans assembled at Jackson, Mich., in June, 1854. But while the Republican fathers of Maine did not take formal action until the following August, it is doubtful whether any of their contemporaries in other States began to cooperate earlier to form an anti-slavery organization, or come together at the final moment with a longer existing purpose and better record of practical affiliation. The Republican fathers of Maine are therefore entitled to a page in the history of their party.

The men who gathered at Strong on August 7, 1854, were the chosen representatives of anti-slavery Democrats and Whigs, Free-Soilers and Independent Democrats, or Prohibitionists, who had been almost continuously harmonious in spirit and action for four years. Their cooperation dated from the senatorial election of 1850, when their representatives in the legislature reelected Hannibal Hamlin to the United States Senate. The temperance issue which arose the next year strengthened the bonds between them, and when Governor Hubbard was opposed for reelection by the pro-slavery wing of his party for signing the prohibitory liquor law, the anti-slavery elements united to elect him in the legislature. In 1852 the contest over the liquor law led to a further breach in the Democracy, and a bitter struggle took place in a convention at Paris Hill, Mr. Hamlin's old home, over the question of renominating or retiring two senators who had helped defeat Governor Hubbard. Sidney Perham, John J. Perry, Hiram Hubbard, Alden Chase, James Clark, and other leaders of Oxford County, as a result of this convention, began organizing the anti-slavery and temperance people of their county in a practical manner. The notorious Democratic state convention of 1853 hastened the work of consolidating the opponents of slavery and rum.

Thus the conditions in Maine were ripe for the coming of a new party, when the Missouri Compromise was repealed. The leaders of the anti-slavery wing of the Democracy took the initiative by assembling at Portland on June 7, and nominating Anson P. Morrill, for governor, on an anti-slavery and temperance platform. The purpose of forming a new party was evidenced in the speech of Charles J. Talbot, the presiding officer, and Mr. Hamlin's lieutenant in many a contest. He officially invited "the friends of freedom and temperance of every party to act together in solid column." The next step after the convention had adjourned was to unite all who thought alike on the issues of the day. It was decided among the leaders of Franklin County to drop old party names and merge all elements into one organization, and to hold a convention for that purpose. To this end the anti-slavery Democratic, Whig, and Independent Democratic elements of Franklin County published calls in the "Farmington Chronicle" on July 27, for a delegate convention at Strong on the same day, August 7. The calls were signed by the regular committees of each party, and one hundred delegates were allowed to each organization. After holding their

conventions the delegates selected a conference committee, which brought them in joint session.

Organization was perfected by the election of O. G. Currier as president ; B. F. Eastman and C. G. Morrill, vice-presidents, and J. S. Swift, Hannibal Belcher, and G. W. Whitney, secretaries. On the motion of Major John H. Willard, of Wilton, it was moved that the party created should bear the name of the Republican party. Alvan Currier was nominated for state senator, Ephraim Hackett, Jr., county commissioner, and Albert G. Wheeler, Jr., county treasurer. The resolutions, which were drawn up by Charles J. Talbot, enunciated the principles of the party. Among the men present were C. G. Morrill, J. B. Morrison, W. Coffin, G. W. Whitney, D. H. Chandler, Zebulon York, S. P. Morrill, Byron Farrar, Harrison Green, John Titcomb, Samuel Wyman, Albert Pease, John Baker, Nathaniel Gammon, Warren Bullen, A. H. Weeks, and others of the Free-Soil party ; O. L. Currier, Hannibal Belcher, P. M. Stubbs, Seward Dill, T. G. Jones, Daniel Howes, Theodore Marston, George Gage, J. G. Hoyt, William H. Josselyn, P. M. Garcelon, Hiram Stoyell, Jared Smith, Winthrop Norton, and others of the Whig party ; B. F. Eastman, C. J. Talbot, J. D. Prescott, J. W. Porter, Sewell Cram, J. S. Swift, Samuel Daggett, Francis Lawrence, Jonathan Russ, Curtis Smith, A. T. Talbot, Daniel Hale, N. H. Clarke, A. Bolan, A. G. Wheeler, James Atkinson, Thomas Kennedy, and other Independent Democrats.

The thirtieth anniversary of this historic occasion was duly commemorated at Strong, when speeches were made by James G. Blaine, Nelson Dingley, William P. Frye, Frederick Robie, Julius L. Burrows, of Michigan, and Hannibal Hamlin.





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